

HISTORY
OF THE
Seven WISE MASTERS
OF
ROME.

Newly Corrected, and better Explained
in many places.



GLASGOW,
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TO THE READER.

Readers, for thy better delight, and more plainly to set forth this History to thy view, I have Corrected many things which did marr the true meaning thereof. The History of it self is both Ancient and Moral, and containeth in it much of that Learning: when Ignorance having a thick and dull Ear, Men were Compelled to draw the rude Multitude to Attention of good Instruction by such pleasing Allurements of Tales and Fables, as in this Book is set down: that as the mind is fed and delighted with the sweetness of Fabulous Story, the Soul it self at the end (by often Tasting the same Nourishment) grows quicker-sighted to behold the Hidden and Mystical Wisdom contained under such close Riddles. For in few Words, to give you the Meaning of this Moral, it is thus: The Emperor may signifie the World, who having but one only Son, who is Man; him to bring up well, is all his care. But Man losing his own Mother, who is Reason, or divine Grace, and falling into the hands of his Stepmother, signifying Sin, who is an Empress of great bewitching, and one that commands the World, she worketh by all means possible the utter confusion of Man.

And would prevail against his Weakness, but that a Star from Heaven (by which is meant Goodness from above) Instructs Man how to avoid the Allurements of Sin, by not opening his Mouth, to bid her Welcome. And the better to prevent her mischief, he hath Seven Wise Masters, which are seven liberal Sciences, to give him wholesome Instructions: and by those helps, save him from mortal danger. So that being thus Armed, Man liveth to batter down sin (figured in the Death of the Empress and her Minions.) And in the end, to gain a rich Crown of Glory and Happiness, set ready for all those that in this life labor to attain to Heaven by doing well.

This is the Explanation of this Moral: of which if thou makest right use, it will be as a rich Banquet to thy Soul. Fare-well.



HERE

Here beginneth the HISTORY of the seven WISE MASTERS of ROME.

Containing many Pleasant and Witty Narrations, very
delightfull to the Reader.

*The entrance into the Moral, which (according to things of
Comick Pleasure) properly begins with a Funeral*

S Ometime in the City of Rome, there was a famous Emperor, named *Pontianus*, a Man of great Wisdom. He took to his Wife a Kings Daughter, that was very fair, Amiable to all People, gracious, and to her Husband right dear: she conceived by him, and was delivered of a Son, named *Dioclesian*. The child grew apace, and of all People was beloved: And when he was of the Age of seven Years, his Mother the *Empress* falling sick, and feeling her self that she might not live, sent after her Lord the Emperor (being rode forth on progress) a Messenger, that he should return without tarrying, if ever he would see her alive.

And when he was come, she said unto him, Oh my dear Lord, of this infirmity I may not escape, wherefore the naturall and tender love and care that is in me towards you and your Son, makes a sure to you before my death. He answered, Desire what you will; for I shall not deny you any thing. Then said she, After my death you shall take another Wife, as is most convenient; wherefore I instantly beseech you, that she over my Son have no power nor governance, but that he be kept and Nowrished far from her, and that he may be Trained up in Learning and Wisdom. The Emperor then answered; My most dear Wife, your petition in all things shall be fulfilled & performed. Then turned the *Empress* and gave up the Ghost. Many days after, the Emperor bewailed and mourned her death: and long after her burying, he shewed his heaviness and sorrow, and would in no wise be merry, or joyful.

*How the Emperor Committed and Delivered his Son to the
seven Wise Masters, to be instructed in Learning.*

U Pon a time as the Emperor lay in his bed, he bethought him inwardly of his Son, saying in his heart, I have only but one Son, the which shall be mine heir, it is good whilst he is young, that he beset to learn cunning and Wisdom, by the which he may after my death Govern & Rule the Empire. Intimating thereby that a worthy Prince taking upon him so great a weight & charge, as the Government of a Kingdom, ought first to learn to be his own Governor, & to master his own affections. So that when he was early risen up from his bed, he caused to be called

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The Lords of his Council before him, and of them took advice what were best therein to be done. And they answered, Lord, in Rome are seven Wise Masters, who live in great fame for their excellency in Arts, grave counsel, and instruction: let them be sent for, and deliver them your Son to be fostered and instructed in learning. The Emperor understanding that, sent his Letters, made powerful by his own Seal, to the seven wise Masters, that they incontinently should come to him without delay. And they anon came before the Emperor, and he demanded of them, If they knew wherefore that he had sent for them: They answered, The cause is as your will intendeth: we know not; but if it please you to shew us your mind and intent, we be ready to fulfill it to the utmost of our power. To whom the noble Emperor said, I have but one Son, the which I shall deliver unto you, to inform in all good ways of learning and vertue, so that by your Doctrine and Wisdom, he may more wisely guide and govern the Empire after my decease.

The first Master, named *Pantillus*, said, Lord, deliver to me your Son, and I shall teach him as much cunning within seven years as I and all my fellows can.

Then spake the second Master, named *Lentulus*: Sir, of long time I have served you, and hitherto I have had no manner of reward. I demand nothing else of you, but that you deliver me your Son to keep and govern, and I shall make him as cunning within six years, as I and all my fellows be.

The third Master, named *Craton*, said: My Lord, many times have I been with you upon the Sea in peril of my life, and of you have I had no manner of reward: if that I might for my recompence, now obtain that you will vouchsafe to commit your Son under my Rule and Governance, I should inform him as much within five years, if his wit will thereto attain, as I and my fellows can.

Then stood up the fourth Master, named *Malquidrach*, who was right lean of body, and said: My Lord, call to your remembrance how that I and all my predecessors have served Emperors, and have received no manner of reward: wherefore I shall ask no other thing, but that you will deliver me your Son to inform & teach, & I shall make him to take as much science and Wisdom within four years, as I and all my fellows have learned in all our lives.

Then spake the fifth Master, that was named *Josephus*, Lord, I am old, and many times I am called to your Counsel, and you know that my counsel hath availed and profited you, and so likewise may it do hereafter: yet notwithstanding I desire no more, but that you will deliver me your Son, and I shall instruct and inform him in as much cunning and science, that he within three years shall profit in Wit as much as I and all my fellows have.

Then

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Then came forth the sixth Master, named *Cleophon*, who said like to the other, promising him to learn and inform the child in all their cunning in two years.

The seventh Master rose up and said, who also desired the child, and promised to learn him within one year, the Sciences and Wisdoms of them all.

When all this was done, the Emperor said, My trusty friends, I am very much bound to thank you all and every one of you for that you have so earnestly with attention desired to foster & instruct my Son. If I should now commit him to one and not to another, thereon would ensue much dissention and variance among you. Therefore to you all, and every of you, I commit my Son to be nourished and taught. The Masters hearing this, expressing both their greatness of joy, and forwardness in will to the Emperor, all with one harmony of consent took and received his Son, and led him towards the Court of Rome. Upon the way spake *Craton* to his fellows: If we this child should teach within the City of Rome, there is so great resort and concourse of People, that it would hinder and let him in his learning: I know a fair place from Rome some two miles, right pleasant and delectable, there let us make a four square Chamber of stone, & put him therein: and upon the Walls thereto, let us paint and write the seven liberal Arts, so that the Child at all times, may see and behold his Doctrine therein as well as in his book: and this advice and counsel pleased them all, and was done accordingly in every point. The Masters diligently every day during seven years, taught and instructed the child: and determined amongst themselves, and said, It is good that we examine our Disciple, to see to what perfection our pains hath arrived at, and to what strength and growth his vertue & knowledge is come to: and they all wisely and religiously accorded to that Counsel. Then said Master *Pantillas*, How shall we prove him? *Craton* said, Let every one of us as he sleepeth put under every corner of his bed an Olive-leaf, and then we shall know if he perceived or felt any thing or not. This done, he awaking, greatly marvelled, and lifted up his eyes towards the roof of the Chamber frequently: The Masters seeing that, said, Wherefore lift you up your eyes so sharply? he answered, It is no marvel, for in my sleep I saw the uppermost part of the Chamber inclined towards the earth, or else under me it was lifted up. The Masters hearing this, said amongst themselves, If this child may live, he shall be a man of great cunning and fame.

How the Emperor by the Counsel of the great Princes, and Lords of his Empire, wooed another Wife.

THE Princes and great Lords of the Empire in the mean time came to the Emperor and said, My Lord, ye have only but

one Son, it is possible & ye might happen to die, & therefore it were profitable that you would wed another Wife, that thereby your joys and hopes might be blest with far more certainty, and assured happiness in your race and issue, to & intent & the Empire of Rome be not left without an heir. Moreover, ye are so mighty, that if it should happen you to get many Children: ye may promote and advance them all to great Dignities and Lordships. Whereunto answered the Emperor, Is it your counsel & I shall take another Wife: Then seek me one that is gracious, a pure Virgin, fair and gentle born, and then I shall follow your counsel and advice. They went and sought and searched out many Kingdoms and Countries, and at the last they found the Kings Daughter of *Castile*, that was right fair and beautiful, and her they gave the Emperor to Wife, who behaved her self so well, that upon he was so greatly taken in her love, that he forgot all the heaviness and sorrow of heart, that he had taken for the death of his first Wife. And when they had lived long together without Children, and & *Empress* saw well that she might not conceive, then when she heard & the Emperor had a Son with the seven Wise Masters to be fostered and taught, to & great good and profit of the Empire, she thought in her self, and wished his death. And from that hour forth, she imagined how she might conspire his destruction. It happened on a night as & Emperor lay in his bed, he said to the *Empress*, My most dear and best beloved Wife, I shall now show and open to you the secrets of my heart: for under the sun there is no creature & I love so well as you, and therefore trust in my love.

Then said the fair *Empress*, If it be so as you say, I require of you one little boon or petition. Desire what you will, said & Emperor, and all that so me is possible, I shall fulfill and gave it to you. Then said the *Empress*, My dear Lord, you know I have no child by you yet conceived, for & I am sore pensive and heavy: but Fate that never conceals it self long to true joy, hath delivered this happy truth to me, that ye have one Son only, the & is set to the seven Wise Masters to be taught and governed, and him hold I, and repures for mine own Son: wherefore I beseech you that ye will send for him, that I may see him, and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Hereupon answered the Emperor: It is sixteen Years past since that I saw him: your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent & Emperor sent unto the seven Wise Masters a Letter, sealed with his secret Sign, that upon pain of death they should bring his Son in the least of *Pentecost* following.

How the seven Wise Masters after the sight of the Emperors Letters, would first observe the Course and Divine showings of the Firmament and Planets, whether it were good to obey his Commandment, or not.

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AND as the Masters had read the Letter, and had understood the will of the Emperor, in ʒ night time they went, and beheld the Stars in the Firmament, whether it would be expedient to take their journey with the Child after ʒ Emperors will or not: And they saw clearly in the Stars, that if they should lead the Child in that time assigned; at the first word he should speak, he should die an evil death: Wherefore they were all right sorry: and as they beheld another Star, they saw, that if they delivered not the Child at the day aforesaid, they should lose their heads. Then said one of them, of two evils the least is to be chosen: it is better that all we die, than that the Child should lose his life: therefore that we may save the Childs life, let us go to the Emperor. And as they were thus sorrowful, ʒ Child came down from his Chamber; and seeing his Masters so heavy, he demanded them the cause of their heaviness, whereupon they answered, Sir, we have received your Fathers Letters, ʒ upon pain of death now in this high feast of *Pentecost* we should lead you to your Countrey, whereupon we have beholden ʒ firmament, wherein we clearly see and find, that if we within the time before prefixed, present you to your Father, at the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth, ye shall be to ʒ most vilest death condemned. Then said the Child, I must also behold the firmament with the Stars, & so he did, and found clear in a little Star, ʒ if he could abstain from speaking seven days, he should be preserved & save his life. And after he had seen this, he called the Masters, and shewed them ʒ Star, & said, Behold my dear Masters, I see perfectly in the Star, that if I abstain my self by ʒ space of seven days, I shall save my life. Ye are now seven Masters, the Wisest of all the World, it is an easie thing for you, that every of you for me one day to answer, & with your Wife answer every of you his day, my life may save & keep: and in ʒ eight day shall speak of my self, & save my life and all you from peril. As ʒ Masters had beholden ʒ certain Star, they judged with themselves that the child had said truth, saying, Almighty God be thanked, ʒ the Wisdom & Cunning of our Disciple exceedeth us all. Then said the first Master *Pantillas*, Lord, I shall speak for you the first, and save your life. And *Lentulus* the second Master said, I shall for you the second day answer: & so consequently every of them promised to answer for himself his day. And this said, they clothed the Child in Purple, and leapt on Horse-back with a fair company, and hasted them with the Child to the Emperor.

How the Emperor rode to meet his Son coming from study with much joy, Solemnity, and Triumph.

WHEN the Emperor perceived ʒ his Son was coming upon the way, he rode w great joy to meet him. The Masters understanding the coming of the Emperor, said unto the Child,

It is best that he depart, that in the mean while he may provide how we may save your life. The child said, It pleaseth me well that you do so, but have mind of me in time of my necessity: so they took leave and departed towards the City, and the child came after accompanied most honorably. And as he and his Father the Emperor met, for joy and gladness he took his Son about the Neck & kissed him, & said, My dear Son, now is my joy compleat, beholding in thee y^e Treasure of my lifes comfort. How is it with you? It is long since, & I saw you. He bowed down his head and answered nothing: The Father had great wonder why that he speak not, and thought in himself that his Masters had Informed him so, that he riding should not speak. And when they were come into the Palace, and were descended from their Horses, the Father took his Son by the hand, and led him unto the Hall, & set him next him, & beheld him, & said, Tell me now how it is with your Masters? How have thy instructed you these many years past since I saw you? But he inclined down his head, & spake not: The father said, Wherefore speak ye not to me? When the Empress heard that the Emperors Son was come, she was right joyous and glad, and said, I will go see him. She apparelled herself with rich attire, and took with her two of her Gentle-women, and went there as the Emperor was sitting with his Son, and sate her down by the child, and she said to the Emperor, Is this your Son, that hath been nowrished with the seven Wise Masters: And he said, It is my Son, but he speaketh not. She said, deliver to me your Son, and if ever he speak, I shall make him to speak. Then said the Emperor, Rise, and go with her. The Son did reverence to his Father, as though he said, I am ready to accomplish your will, and so went with her.

How the Empress led Dioclesian the Emperors Son with her into her Chamber, for to make good cheer with him, the which he withstood.

THE Empress led him with her into her Chamber, and commanded all other to avoid, and set him by her afore her bed-side, and said: O my best beloved *Dioclesian*, I have heard much of your Person and Beaurty; but now I am glad & I may see that with mine eyes, & my heart coveteth and loveth: for I have caused your Father to send for you that I might have solace & joy of your Person: wherefore right heartily I give you knowledge, That I for your love unto this day, have kept my Virginity: speak to me therefore, & let us go to bed together: but he gave her no answer. She seeing that, said to him, O good *Dioclesian*, & hast the half of my Soul, why speak ye not to me, or at least show me some token of love, what shall I do: speak to me: I am ready to fulfil and perform your will. And when she had thus said, she embraced him, and would have kissed his mouth:

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mouth: but he turned his Visage from her, and in no wise would consent. Then said she again unto him, O Son, wherefore do ye thus with me: let us sleep together, and then shall ye well perceive y^e for your love I have kept my Virginitie: but he turned his Visage again from her. She seeing y^e of her he was ashamed, shewing unto him her naked Body and Breasts, and said, Behold, my Son, what Body I have, it is at your will, a servant and Subject to your Delight and Pleasure: give me your consent, or else it shall be hard for me to depart hence wth my right mind. He neither shewed her any manner of Love, but as much as he could, withdrew himself from her. When she saw that, she said, O my sweet Son, if it please you not to consent unto me yet speak, perhaps for some reasonable cause: lo, here is Pen, Ink & Paper, then Write your will, whether I may at any time hereafter trust in your love or not: The child Wrote as hereafter followeth: O Lady, God forbid y^e I should defile my Fathers Orchard: for I wot not what Fruit I should have of it. I know well one thing, y^e I should singreatly in y^e sight of God, & also run in y^e Malediction of my Father, and therefore from henceforth, I pray you, to provoke & stir me no more thereto. When she had seen & read y^e writing, she tare it with her teeth, and rent her Cloaths to her Navel, and also scratched her Visage, untill it was all bloody, and cast from her all the Ornaments of her Head, & cryed out wth a loud voice, come hither, my Lords & help me, lest that this rude and evil body shame & ravish me.

*How the Empress complained to the Emperor of the
shame done unto her by his Son.*

THE Emperor being in y^e Hall, and hearing the noise & cry of the Empress, he hastily ran toward her Chamber, with many of his Knights, & other of his Servants following him, to see what was the matter. Then began the Empress to cry, and speak to the Emperor in this wise: O my Lord, have pity and compassion upon me: behold this young man is not your Son, but the foulest for ribaldry and actions of luxury, y^e ever sin & heat put strength into: for as you know well, I led him & brought him wth me into my Chamber, & would have exhorted, and caused him to have spoken, I have done as much therefore as I can or may: and whilst I with my words exhorted and moved him to have spoken, he hath endeavoured himself wth me to have sinned: and because I would not with him consent, but withstood as much as I might to fly the same, he hath made my Visage all bloody, and hath also torn my Vesture & Ornaments off my Head, as you may openly see: and if you had not soon come unto my calling, he had ended in me his most foul & wicked appetit. When the Emperor saw and heard this (filled with great malice and woodness) he commanded his Servants that they would lead him to the gallows and hang him. And when
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the Lords heard thereof, they said, Lord, you have no more but this son only, it is not good & ye thus slightly put him to death. The law is ordained for transgressors, and mis-doers. And if it be so that he must die, let him by the law die, lest it be said that the Emperor in his great fury and wrath, without law & justice hath put his only son to death. As the Emperor heard this, he commanded him to be put in prison, until the time that judgment was given against him. And when the Empress understood that the child was not put to death, she cried & wept bitterlie, and would take no rest. When the night was come, the Emperor entered into his chamber to go to bed, & found his wife weeping & sorrowing: to whom he said, O my dear Lady, for what cause are ye sorrowful? She answered, know you not how that your accursed son hath done me so much shame, & so dishonored you, that you have commanded him to be hanged, & yet he liveth, and your word is not performed, neither is my shame revenged. To morrow, said the Emperor, he shall die by the law. Then said she, shall he so long live? then might it happen to you as it did to a burges of Rome, of whom an example is mentioned. The Emperor said, I pray you show me this example. That shall I do gladly, said the Empress.

The first Example of the Empress.

IN the City of Rome was a Burges, the which had a fair Gardin, wherein he had standing a noble Tree, the which everie year brought forth fruit of good verue: for whosoever ate thereof that were sick of anie manner of sickness or leprosie, he should soon be whole and receive his sight.

It happened upon a day as the Burges went into his garden to visite and see the Tree, he espied under the Tree a fair young imp, & called to him & Gardiner, & said, My friend, of this young imp I give thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better Tree then this is: The Gardiner said, I shall it gladly do. Another time the Burges came again into his garden to visite the young plant, and it appeared unto him, that it grew not so much as it should do, and he said to the gardiner, How may this be? And he said, it is no wonder, for this great tree hath so great arms and branches, that the air may not come to the root of this young tree. Then said the Burges, Cut and hew off the arms and the boughs, that the air may come thereto. The Gardiner did as he was Comanded. The Burges came again another time to see the young plant, and thought that it never grew the better, and said to the Gardiner, What is it that letteth this plant to grow now? And then he said, I suppose the hight of the old tree letteth the sun, that the rain may not come thereto, & therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master unto him, Hew down that tree to the ground, for I hope of this plant to have a better then ever that was. The gardiner hearing his Master, obeyed him, and hewed down the tree: and as soon as this was done,

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the young plant all whollie perished, & came to nought, whereof came great harm: for when the poor and sick people perceived that the tree was destroyed, they cursed all them γ were counsellors & helpers thereto, by the which they oftentimes were healed, and cures of their infirmities and malidies. Then said the Empress to her Lord, understand ye what I have said? He answered, Yea, Right well: then said she, I will declare to you the meaning of that which I have said.

The Declaration of the Example.

THIS tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most noble person, how that with your counsel and help, many poor and sick folks are greatlie holpen and comforted: and the young imp which is grown under the great tree, is your accursed Son, that now by cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth first, how he may cut off the arms and boughs of your might, and how to win him the Land and favour of the people: yea, and more unnaturallie, imagineth to destroy your person, that he may himselfe reign: but what shall then ensue thereof? All poor and feeble people shall curse them, who might have destroyed your son, and have not done it: Therefore I counsel you, whilst you are in your power, and living, that ye destroyed him, lest γ the curse of γ people fall upon you. Then said the Emperor, Ye have given me good counsel: to morrow I shall condemn him to the vilest death that can be thought upon. When the day was come, γ Emperor went and sat in judgment, and commanded his servants that they should lead his son to be hanged with Trumpers sounding in token of death. And as the Emperors son was led through the City, the common people began to weep and cry, Alace, the only son of the Emperor, is led towards his death: & therewithall came *Pantillas* the first Master riding upon a horse. When the child saw him, he bowed his head to him, as though he said, have mind upon me when you come before my Father, see how I am led towards the Gallows. Then the Master said to the servants, Make no haste, for I hope by the grace of God this day to deliver him from death. Then said all the people, O good Master, haste you to the palace, and save your disciple. He smote γ horse with his spurs till he came to γ palace, & knelled to the Emperor, and did him reverence: To whom the emperor said, It shall never be to thy good, who answered, I have deserved a better reward. The Emperor said, Thou liest, for I have delivered him to thee in all things well mannered, and now he is brought home dumb, and hath sought to work his will to γ shame of my vertuous Empress, and to γ dishonour of his Fathers bed for ever, therefore this day he shall die: and ye shall all die a shamefull death. Then said the Master, Lord, forasmuch as your son speaketh not, the cause thereof God knoweth, & without cause it is not, as ye shall understand: and where you say, that he would have committed this sin of inforcement on your

Empress,

Empress, I shall say to you of a truth, He hath been in our company by the space of sixteen years, and we never could perceive such abuse by him. And therefore, my dear Lord, I shall shew you one thing, that if you put your Son to death for the Words of your Wife, it shall happen to you worse then to a Knight, which killed his best Grayhound through the words of his Wife, which saved his Son from Death. Then said the Emperor to the Master, tell me that Example. The Master said, Lord, that shall I not do, for before I shall make an end thereof, your Son might be Dead, and then in Vain, and without hope should I rehearse it: but if it pleaseth you this noble Example to hear, call again your Son till to Morrow, and as you think by Reason, then do with him your pleasure. As the Emperor heard that, anon he willed the Child to be called again, and in the mean time he set him in Prison while the Master finished his tale, and then he began in this manner following.

The Example of the first Master.

THere was a Valiant Knight which had one only Son as you have, the which he loved so much, that he ordained for his helpers three Nowrifiers. The first should give him suck, and feed him. The second should wash him, & keep him clean: And the third should bring him to his sleep and rest. The Knight had also a Grayhound and a Falcon, which he also loved right well. The Grayhound was so good, that he never run at any game, but he took it, and held it till his Master came. And if his Master disposed him to go unto any Battel, if he should not speed therein anone as he should mount upon his Horse, the Grayhound would take the Horse-tail in his mouth, and draw backward, & would also cry and howl marvelously loud. By these signs, & the due observation thereof, the Knight did alwayes understand that his journey should have very ill success. The falcon was so gentle and hardie, that he was never cast off to his prey but he took it.

The same Knight had much pleasure in Justing and Tourney, so that upon a time under his Castle he proclaimed a Turnament, to the which came many great Lords and Knights. The Knight entred into the Tourney, and his Ladie went with her Maidens to see it; and as they went out, after went the Nowrifiers, & left the Child lying alone there in the Cradle, in the Hall: where the grayhound lay near the wall, & the Hawk or falcon standing upon a perch. In this hall there was a serpent lurking, or hid in a hole, to all them of the Castle unknown, the which when he perceived & they were all absent, he put his head out of his hole, & when he saw none but & Child lying in & Cradle, he went out of his hole towards & Cradle, for to have slain & Child. The noble falcon perceiving that, and he beholding the grayhound & was sleeping made such a noise, & rustling with her wings, presently that the grayhound awoke, and rose up: and when he saw the serpent nigh the child, anone against him he leapt, & they both

fought

fought so long together, untill y^e the serpent had grievously hurt and wounded the grayhound, that he bled so sore, that the earth about y^e Cradle was all bloody. The grayhound when that he felt himself grievously wounded & hurt, start fiercely upon y^e serpent, and fought so fore together, and so eagerly, that between them y^e Cradle was overtost with the Child, the bottome upward.

And because that the Cradle had four pomels like feet, falling towards the earth, they saved the Childs life, & his visage from any hurt: What can be more exprest to make good y^e wonder in the preservation of the Child? Incontinently hereafter, w^{ch} great pain the grayhound overcame and slew the serpent, & laid him down again in his place, & licked his wounds. And anon after as the Jufts and Tourney was done, the Nowrifiers came first into the Castle, & as they saw the Cradle turned y^e up side down upon the earth, compassed round about with blood: and y^e the grayhound was also bloody, they thought & said amongst themselves, that the grayhound had slain the Child: & were not so wise as to turn up y^e Cradle again w^{ch} the Child, for to have seen what was thereof befallen. But they said, let us run away, lest that our Master should put or lay the blame upon us, & so slay us. As they were thus running away, they met y^e Knights Wife, & she said unto them, Wherefore make ye this sorrow, & whether will ye run? Then said they, O Lady, wo & sorrow be to us, and to you. Why, said she, what is there hapned? show me, the grayhound, they said, y^e our Lord & Master loved so well, hath devoured and slain your Son, & lyeth by the wall all full of blood. As the Lady heard this, she presently fell to y^e earth, and began to weep and cry pitiously, & said, Alas, O my dear Son, are ye thus slain and dead? What shall I now do, that I have mine only Son thus lost? Wherewithal came in y^e Knight from the Tourney, beholding his Lady thus crying & making sorrow, he demanded of her wherefore she made so great sorrow and Lamentation? She answered him, O my Lord, y^e grayhound that you have loved so much, hath slain your only Son, and lyeth by the wall satiated w^{ch} y^e blood of the Child: The Knight very exceeding angry, went into the hall, & the grayhound went to meet him, & did fawn upon him, as he was wont to do, and the Knight drew out his Sword, and with one stroak smote off y^e grayhounds head, & then he went to the Cradle where y^e Child lay, & found his Son all whole, & by y^e Cradle y^e serpent slain: and then by diverse signs, he perceived y^e the grayhound had killed the serpent for the defence of the Child. Then with great sorrow and weeping he rare his hair, and said, Wo be to me, that for the words of my Wife, I have slain my good and best grayhound, the which hath saved my Childs life, & hath slain the serpent: therefore I will put my self to penance: & so he brake his Sword in three pieces, and went towards the holy Land, and abode there all the days of his life. Then said the

Master

Master to the Emperor, Lord, understand ye what I have said: And answered and said, Right well. The Master said, If you do put your son to death for the words of your wife, it shall happen to you worse then it did to \S Knight for his gray hound. The Emperor said, Ye have shewed me a fair example, & without doubt this day my son shall not die. Then said the Master, If you do so, you do wisely, and I thank now that you have now spared him this day for my sake.

The second complaint of the Empress. A sorrow mingled with much cunning and falsehood.

When the Empress heard that the child was not yet dead, she began to weep bitterly, & fate her down on the earth in ashes, and would not lift up her head; when the Emperor heard that, he entred into the chamber, and said unto her, O good wife, wherefore make you all this sorrow, and trouble your self so much? She said, Ask ye that of me, know ye not well what great despite and shame I have suffered of your unhappy son, & how ye have promised me \S you would see justice to be therefore executed on him, and yet he liveth: O a truth it will happen to you, as hapned to a shepherd and a boar. The Emperor said, I pray you show me that example for my learning. She said, As yesterday I shewed you one, and saw no good effect that came thereof, to what end should I now do the like? Nevertheless I shall declare this noble example unto you, as hereafter you shall hear.

The second Example of the Empress.

There was sometime an Emperor, the which had a great forrest, wherein was a wild boar, which was so cruel & so fierce, that he killed and devoured men going through the forrest. The Emperor thereof being right heavy, proclaimed throughout all his dominions, that whatsoever he was that could slay \S boar, should have his only daughter to wife, and therewith his empire after his death: and as this was in places proclaimed, there was not one man found that durst give this adventure: But there was a shepherd who thought in himself: Might I the boar overcome and slay, I should not only advance my self, but also my generation & kindred: so then he took his shepherds staff in his hand, and went to the forrest: and as the boar had of him a sight, he drew towards the herdsmen, but he for fear climbed upon a tree, and then the boar began to bite and gnaw the tree.

So the herd thought shortly that he would have overthrown it. This tree was laden with great plenty of fruit, and the herd gathered and plucked thereof, and cast them to the boar, in so much that when he was filled therewith, he laid him down to sleep: \S which when the herd perceived, by little and little descended \S tree, and with the one hand he cleaved the boar, and \S the other held him upon the tree, and seeing \S the boar slept very soundly, he drew out his knife, and smote the boar to the heart, and killed him.

him: And so shortly after he wedded the Emperors daughter; and after the death of her father, he was made Emperor. Then said she, My Lord, wot ye not what I have said? He said, Right well: Then said she, This mighty boar betokeneth your most noble person, against whom may no man withstand, neither by wisdom, nor with strength. This shepherd with his staff is y^e person of your ungracious son, who with his staff of cunning, beginneth to play with you, as the herd-man clawed y^e boar, & made him to sleep and after killeth him. In the same manner the Masters of your Son, by their false fables and narrations claw you, and glose with you, untill the time that your son slay you, that he may reign. Then said the Emperor, GOD forbid that they should do to me as he did to the wild boar: and he said unto her, This day my Son shall die: and she answered, if you do so, then do ye wisely. Then the Emperor y^e second time sitting in judgment, commanded to lead him to the place of execution appointed for that purpose: and whilst he was going, the second Master came before the Emperor, doing him great reverence, as before is shewed in the coming of the first Master: to whom the second Master said, O my Lord and Emperor, if you should slay your Son for the words of your wife, it shall happen worse to you, then it did to a certain Knight, & for the words of his wife was unjustly put upon the Pillory. The Emperor said, O good Master, tell me how that happened. And he said, My Lord, I shall not say it, unless you will call your only Son from the death, untill the time that the example be told, the & if it turn not you from your purpose, then your will be fulfilled. Then the Emperor commanded that the child should be called again: and under this manner that followeth, y^e second Master began to tell.

The Example of the second Master.

In a City was an ancient Knight which wedded a young wife, and fair, as ye have done, whom he loved above all earthly things. This Knight was a very circumspect & careful husband, in so much y^e every night he locked in the door wth his own hands, and laid the keyes under his beds head. In that city there was a law or custome, that at a certain hour in the night a bell was used to be rung, that after the ringing of the said bell, if any man or woman were by the watch-men found, about the streets, all y^e night they should be kept fast in prison, and on the morrow set fast upon a Pillory, that all the people might behold and wonder at them.

This fore-said Knight had little mind or lust of fleshly deeds, for that he was very old, and might not satiate or perform the desires & appetites of his young wife: wherefore every night she having a paramour, her husband sleeping, took the keyes from under his beds head, and went to her lover, and when she came again, all privily she laid the keyes under her husbands head: and thus she played many a time.

So it happened upon a night, that the Knight awaked out of his sleep, and missed his wife, and also the keyes under his beds head, whereupon he then rose up, and went unto the doors, and found them open, the which he closed and bolted fast within, & then went up again into his chamber, and looked out at the window towards the street: and when it was near about 3 third cocks crow, his wife came from her best beloved, and found 3 door shut & bolted within: then was she sorrowful, nevertheless she knocked to have come in. Then spake the Knight out of 3 window: O thou most wicked and unclean wife, now I know, and am expert that many times thou hast forsaken my bed, and gone and done adultery: now thou shalt stand until the bell be rung, and that the watch-men may take thee, and do with thee according to the law. His wife answered, My Lord, why do ye lay that to me: for in very truth, the cause of my being abroad, was for no ill, but I was called by my Mothers maid, and fetched in 3 night: & when I saw you sleep so sweetly, I durst not awake you, because that ye are old; and therefore I took the keyes, and went to my Mother, 3 which is fore sick, that I fear to-morrow she must be annointed, or annihilated notwithstanding: for because 3 I would not you offend, I have hastned me again unto you, and have left her lying in great pain and infirmity: therefore, I pray you for the love of God, let me in before the bell ringeth. The Knight answered, Ye shall not so come in, ye must there abide until the time that the bell ringeth, and until 3 the watch-men come and take you. Then said she, that should be to you, and to me, and unto all our friends & kindred a great shame and rebuke: therefore for the reverence of Almighty God, let me come in. Then said he, Have in thy mind, evil & false Wife, how oftentimes thou hast forsaken my bed, and done adultery: it is much better that thou suffer shame, and bewail for thy sins here in this world, then for to suffer pain in hell. She said again to him I pray you, for 3 love of him 3 was crucified, & died on 3 cross, have mercy on me. The Knight said, thou laborest in vain, for thou shalt not come in, but thou shalt carry 3 coming of the watch-men. She hearing 3, said, My Lord, ye know 3 by this door standeth a well, if you let me not come in, I shall therein drown my self, rather then all my friends should be ashamed for me. Then said he, Would to God thou hadst been drowned long before that ever thou camest in my bed. As they thus spake together, 3 Moon went down, and all was very dark: then said she, if it will not otherwise be, I shall drown my self: but ye before, like a true Christian woman, I will make my testament. First, I bequeath to God my soul, and my body to be buried in the Church of S. Peter: and of all other things and goods that God hath sent me, I give unto you, to dispose for my soul, after your wisdom and discretion. And when she had thus said, she went unto the well, and there lying a great stone with both her

arms she lift it up, & said, Now I drown my self, & so cast y
stone down into the Well, & went again privily, & stood by y
Door. The *Knight* hearing the Noile, cryed with a loud Voice,
saying, Alace, alace, my sweet Wife, is drowned. And so he
hastily came down, and ran to the Well: and when she saw y
the Door was open, presently she entred in, & locked the Door,
and went up into the Chamber, and lay & looked out of the
Window. The *Knight* stood by the Well, and cryed, & Wept
bitterly, and said, Wo be to me, I have now lost my best beloved
Wife: now cursed be the time that I made fast the Door against
her. When the Lady heard that, she said, O thou cursed old
grayard, why standest thou there at this time of y night? Was
not my body to you sufficient? Wherefore do you thus go every
night to your Harlots and your Whores, and leave my bed? As
he heard the voice of his Wife, he was right glad, & said, Blessed
be God, that yet she is not drowned. But my good Lady, where-
fore do you lay such things against me? I thought to have
chastised you, and therefore I locked fast y Door, but in no wise
I intended it to your peril: ye know well what sorrow I made
for you, when I heard you to have fallen into the Well, and there-
fore I came, thinking to have helped you. Whereupon she said,
Thou liest falsely, I never committed such faults as thou sayest to
me: but it appeareth by a common Proverb, He y is guilty or
culpable himself in a sin, he judgeth every man to be in the same:
or else, The father never sought his Son in the oven, except he
had been therein himself. In like case conceivest thou a false
furnise of me: but one thing I promise thee, thou shalt abide
there untill the Watch-men do come, and the bell rung that they
may lead thee before the judges, to abide and suffer the Law.
Then said the *Knight*, Wherefore lay ye such things to me that
am old, impotent, and most unmeet to delight in such a game?
I have dwelt long in this City, and never was defamed, and
therefore let me in, that to me or to your self, ye do no shame.
She said, Ye say in vain, it is better that ye forethink your sins
in this World then in hell. Have in mind what the Wife man
saith, A poor man proud, a rich man a liar, and an old man a
fool, God hateth: so be you a fool and rich. What need was it
for you to slander me, and cannot be content when as you have
y flower of my youth at your pleasure, but yet runneth to harlots,
and therefore it is the great grace of God that you have time and
space to forethink it, lest ye should perish, and be damned for more
sins, and therefore suffer your penance patiently? The *Knight*
said, O my best beloved Lady, although it be so, yet is God
mercifull, and he asketh nothing of a sinner, but that he amend
his life, and forethink himself, and do penance for his sins. Now
let me come in, and I will make amends. She said, What devil
hath made you so good a Preacher? but so you come not in.
And as they thus spake, the bell rung, and then he entreated

very fervently, saying, Now suffer me to come in, that I be not ashamed for ever. She answered, The ringing of the bell doth pretend the health of your Soul. And as this was said, then presently came the Watch-men about the City, and found the Knight standing in the street, & said to him, O good man, it is not good y^e ye stand here in this hour in the night. As she heard the voice of the Watch-men, she said, Good fellows, avenge me on y^e old accursed Whore-hunter, for ye know whose Daughter I am. This cursed old man is wont every night to leave my bed, & go to his Whores & Harlots. I have long time forborn him, & would not shew it, nor Complain on him to my Friends: for I trusted y^e he would have amended his Misrule, and it helpeth not: & therefore take him, & punish him after the Law, that all such old doters may take Example by him. Then the Watch-men took him, & all night Chastised him in Prison, & on the morrow they put him on the Pillory. Now said the Master to the Emperor, Lord, have you understood what I have said? And he said Right well. Then said the Master, If you put to death your Son by the Intigation of your Wife, it shall chance unto you worse then to the Knight.

The Emperor said, she was the worst Woman that ever I heard of, that so falsly brought her Husband to shame and rebuke: I say unto you, Master, That for the Reason of this Example, my Son shall not die this day. The Master said unto him, If you do so, then you do Wisely, & that hereafter you shall joy: so I commit you to God, & thank you for your patient hearing, and for the sparing of your Son, and so he departed.

The third Complaint of the Empress, more full of cunning and Dissembling sorrow then the former.

When the Empress heard that the Child was not dead, she wept bitterly, & entred into her privy Chamber, and rare her skin with her Nails, & with a loud voice cryed, Alas, that ever I was born, that I so great a Kings Daughter, should be thus intreated & shamed, and therefore can have no remedy. Her Gentle-woman hearing this, went and shewed it to the Emperor, and he went unto her: and comforted her saying, O Lady, weep not so, nor cry not, for it becometh you not. Who answered, The love that I have and owe unto you, maketh me more sorrow, then the contempt of the death: for why y^e inward Love of your Heart, hath hitherto prohibited, and letted me, that I have not returned again into my Countrey to my Father, but I fear should I so do, it might turn to your harm; for he is mighty to honor me with his Riches, and to revenge my quarrel and despight in such wise that ye might repent it. Whereto said y^e Emperor, Let that pass out of your mind, neither repeat it any more, for as long as I live, I shall never fail you. And she said, Lord, I pray God y^e you may long live: but I fear

me that it shall happen you as it befel to a *Knight* and his Son that would not bury his Fathers head in the Church-yard, and yet his Father slain for him. Then said the *Emperor*, shew me the Example how it was that he would not bury his Fathers head. She said, I shall do it for your profit.

The third Example of the *Empress*.

IN the City of *Rome* there was a *Knight* which had two Daughters and one Son. And this *Knight* had so great delight in Hunting, Justing and Tounney, that all things that he might win & get, he laid & spent it thereupon. In & time lived an *Emperor* named *Othavian*, & in his Riches of Gold & Silver exceeded all other Kings and Princes, insomuch that he had a Tower full of Gold & ordained a *Knight* to have & keeping & Charge thereof. This *Knight* had so hunted Justing, and other idle Games, came to so great Poverty, that he was forced out of the Extremity of his adverse Fortunes, to sell his Heritage, & called to him his Son, & said, My Son, it behoveth me of your Counsell, for Necessity & Poverty Compelleth me to sell mine Heritage, or else to find some other way whereby I may live: for if I should sell mine Heritage, both you & your Sisters should perish. Then the Son said, Father, if ye can find any manner of means without selling of your Heritage, I should be ready to help you. The Father said, I have thought on a good Counsell: The *Emperor* hath a great Tower full of Gold, by night time let us together with Instruments, dig and hew throw y^e Tower, and let us take of the Gold, as much as shall suffice us. Whereunto the Son answered & said, That counsell cannot be amended, for it is better of the *Emperors* Gold to take, to help us, then to sell our Heritage.

So they rose up both in the night, & went to the Tower, & with Instruments they made a hole thorow the Wall, & took as much Gold as they could both carry away at that time, & the *Knight* payed his debts, & Hunted again Justs, as he did before, untill all was spent & consumed. In y^e mean while the keeper of the Treasure went into the Tower, & when he saw y^e Treasure stoln, and a great hole made thorow the Wall, he began to waver afore afraid, & went unto the *Emperor*, and shewed how it was fallen. To whom the *Emperor* said all angry, What needest thou to show that, have I not delivered to thee my Treasure, and therefore of thee I will ask it? Anone as the keeper heard that, he went to the Tower again, and set before the hole a great Vessel full of Pitch melted, with other gins of Subtillity, that no man might come in at that hole, but he must needs fall into that Vessel: & if he had therein fell, he could no more come out of it. Not long after, y^e *Knight* had all y^e Gold consumed & spent, & went again wth his Son to y^e Tower to steal more Gold. And as the Father went in first, anon he was fallen into y^e Vessel full of Pitch to y^e Neck, & when he saw y^e he was taken, and could not get out;

he said to his Son, Follow me not, for if thou dost, thou canst not escape by any means. Then said *ſ* Son, God defend *ſ* I should not help you: For if you are found, we are all but dead, and if you may not be holpen by me, I shall seek counſel how that you may be delivered & holpen. The Father ſaid, There is none other counſel, but with thy Sword ſmite off my head, and as my body is found wout an head, no man ſhall know me, and ſo thou and my Daughters may eſcape, and avoid this worldly ſhame and death. The Son ſaid, Father, ye have given *ſ* beſt counſel: for if it were ſo *ſ* any man might perceive any knowledge of you, none of us all ſhall eſcape the death, and it is expedient *ſ* your head be ſmitten off: anon he drew out his Sword and ſmote off his Fathers head, and caſt it into a pit, and then went and ſhewed unto his Siſters all *ſ* matter, who many days after privily bewailed *ſ* death of their Father. After this the keeper of *ſ* treasure came into the Tower, and found a body wout a head: whereat he wondred fore, and ſhewed it to the *Emperor*: to whom he ſaid, Bind that body at *ſ* tail of an horſe, and ſo draw it thorow all the ſtreets of the City, and diligently take good heed if ye hear any cry, or weeping, whereſoever ye hear that, he is *ſ* Lord of *ſ* houſe: take all of them, and *ſ* body, draw them to *ſ* gallows and hang them. The & *ſ* *Emperor* ſervants fulfilled according to his commandment: and as they came againſt *ſ* houſe of *ſ* dead Knight, *ſ* Daughters ſeeing the body of their dead Father, made a marvelous great ſhrike, and wept piteouſly: and as their brother heard that, anon he wounded himſelf with a knife, ſo that great plenty of blood came out of the wound. The Officers when they heard the cry, entred into the houſe, demanding *ſ* cauſe of their clamor. Then answered the Son, they lament becauſe I am thus wounded: For when my Siſters ſaw my blood ſo abundantly to go out as you ſee, they began to weep and cry: and when *ſ* Officers ſaw *ſ* wound they believed his words, and ſo deceived went their ways, and hung the *Knights* body upon *ſ* gallows, where he hung a long time, and his Son would neither take his body down from *ſ* gallows, nor yet bury his head. The *Empreſs* ſaid, underſtand ye what I have ſaid. The *Emperor* ſaid right well.

The Declaration of the Example.

Then ſpake *ſ* *Empreſs* thus: my Lord, I fear it will ſo chauce to you & your Son: this night for the love of his Son was made poor & fiſt he committed theft, & brake the tower: ſecondly, cauſed himſelf to be beheaved, *ſ* his Children ſhould have no ſhame: after *ſ* Son caſt his head into *ſ* dike & buried it not neither in Church nor Church-yard, & his body he ſuffered ſtill to hing upon *ſ* gallows: If *ſ* he could not have taken it down in *ſ* day, he might well have done it in the night. In *ſ* ſame manner ye labor night & day, *ſ* ye may promote your Son to honor & riches, but without doubt he labourerth for your conſuſion & deſtruction, that he may reign after you in your Empire. Therefore

Therefore I advise you, & you speedily take away his life: who living, should suddenly prove & destruction of yours. The *Emperer* said, You have shewed me a good Example. The *Knightes* Son when he had smitten off his fathers head, would not bury it: without doubt my Son shall not do so to me: but he anon commanded his Officers & they should lead him to & gallows, & they all obeyed his commandments haistly: And as they led him through the streets, & People made a great noise & lamentation, crying, *Alas, alas,* & only Son of & *Emperer* is led again toward the gallows: & as they led him, & third *Master* named *Craton*, came riding upon an horse: & as & Child saw him, he did bow down his head to him, as though he had said, have mind upon me, & people cryed, saying, O good Master, hast you, and save your *Disciple*, & so he smote his horse with his spurs, & hasted him to & Palace. And when he came before & *Emperer*, he honorably saluted him: who said, Thy coming hither shall nothing avail thee, for I think it long untill I be revenged on thee. The *Master* said, I hoped at my coming to have been made welcome, & to have had a better toward, & not so to be rebuked. The *Emperer* said, As ye have deserved, so shall it be to you. To whom he said, My Lord, What have I deserved? The *Emperer* said, ye right well deserve death, for I delivered you my Son well speaking, & well mannered for to be informed & taught: & ye have delivered him again unto me dumb, & a ribauld. To whom & *Master* said, in & you say he is dumb, that I commit to God, for he makes & dumb to speak, & deaf to hear. But in & you say he would have informed your Wife, that would I gladly know, if any creature hath seen that, for there is no Malice above the Malice of a Woman, and that shall I prove by a good Example, & a Woman is full of falshood & unknown deceits: and if you put to death your Son for the words of your Wife, it shall happen unto you, as it did to a Noble man of his Wife and his Pye, & & he loved marvelously. To whom the *Emperer* said, I pray you tell me how & Women are full of malice and leasings, who said, I will not show it, but if you will first call again your Son from death, then at your pleasure I shall show & Example. Then & *Emperer* anon made his Son to be called again, & to be put in prison. Then & *Master* began to tell the Example, in this manner and form following.

The Example of the third Master.

There was in a City a rich Burges & had a Pye, & & he loved so well, & every day he taught her to speak Latine & Hebrew & when she had learned very perfectly to speak those two Languages, all & she saw & heard, she shewed & told her *Master*.

This young man had a fair young Wife, as ye have, the & he loved full well: but she on & contrary loved him not, because he was not of & lascivious performance, for to answer her lusts according to & night of her desire: & therefore she had another & young man & she loved above her Husband: & always as her

Husband was out of the Town, about his Merchandise & other business, she sent for her best beloved, & they might make good cheer together. The Pye as she espyed & told it to be her Master at his coming home, in such a manner as the Noise thereof ran all over & city of her adultery, wherefore her Husband many times brauled & chid & her. She answered him, Ye believe your cursed Pye & as long as she liveth shall always make betwixt us variance & discord: & he said, That Pye cannot lie, for what she seeth & heareth, & she telleth me; and therefore I believe her more than you. It fortuned & this man went into a far Countrey about his Merchandise, & as soon as he was gone, his Wife sent for her friend & love to solace & make good cheer & him: but he durst not come by day light, but abode untill & evening, lest he should be marked & seen of the People, & when & night was come, then he Knocked at & Gate, & she was ready & opened it: He said, I fear that the cursed Pye shall accuse us: for by her is come great slander upon us through the City: enter in, she said, boldly, and fear not. And they should pass through the Hall, where the Pye was in her Cage, she heard him say these words, O my best beloved, I fear me greatly lest & the Pye should bewray us. And as & Wife heard that, she said, Be still, fool, it is dark, she may not see you. Then & Pye hearing that, said, If I see thee nor, I hear thy voice, & thou dost wrong unto my Master, for thou sleepest with my Mistress, and when my Master cometh I shall tell him. The young Man hearing that, said, Told I not you & & Pye would discover us? And & Wife said, Fear not, for this night we will be avenged on & Pye, & so they entred into & Chamber, & slept together & night. About midnight & Wife arose, & called her Maid, & said, Fetch me a Ladder, and set it up to the roof of & House, & I may revenge me on the Pye. The Maid did even so, and so they went up both and made a hole thorow the covering of the house right over the Pye, & there thorow cast sand, clay, stones & water upon the Pye, in so much & & poor Pye was almost dead: & on & morrow & young man went out early at & back-door. And when the good man was come home, as his custom was, he went & visited the Pye, and said to her, O Pye, my beloved bird, tell me how thou hast fared & whiles & I have been out? She said, Master, I shall tell you tydings that I have heard: your Wife, as soon as you were gone by the night time she let a man come in. And as soon as I heard that, I told him that I would show it to you, at you coming home, yet notwithstanding she led him into your Chamber, & slept with him all night: you ask me also how that I have done in your absence, & I say to you of a truth, that I never was so nigh my death, as I was that same night, & snow, hail, and rain, & fell upon me so long together, that I was almost left for dead. The Wife when she heard that, said to her Husband: Sir, you believe your Pye, now you may hear what she saith: she

complains

The seven Wise Masters.

complained in the same night there fell so much Snow, Hail, & Rain upon her, that she was almost dead: and yet there was none of all them that same night, for there was not in the year a Fairer & Clearer night then it was: and therefore from henceforth believe her not. Then went a good man to his Neighbors, & asked of them if a night there were any tempest or rain: They answered, y some of them walked a night, & in all that Year, they had not seen a fairer night. Then went he to his House, & said to his Wife, I have found you in a Truth, for a night was very fair & clear, as I understand of your Neighbors. You may now know of a Truth, said she, y a Pye is a Liar, with her leasings she hath sown & made much discord betwixt us: & moreover, I am defamed through a City by her false leasings. Then the Burgees went unto the Pye, and said, Wherefore hast thou made lyes & false tales betwixt me & my Wife? Is this the thanks that I have for the meat that I was wont to give thee w my own hands every day: & thou hast also thereby brought my Wife into great Defamation and disgrace through all the Town? The Pye answered, God knoweth I cannot lie, for that which I saw and heard, have I shewed unto you. Then said he, Thou liest, thou hast said unto me, that in the same Night was Hail, and Snow, and Rain, that thou hast near hand lost thy Life, which is most false: And therefore from henceforth thou shalt make no more leasings, nor discord betwixt me and my Wife, and so took the Pye and broke her peck.

When as a Wife saw that, she was glad, & said, Now have you done well, now may we all our days live in rest & peace. And when he had slain the Pye, he looked up & saw in the top of a house a ladder, & a Vessel with Water, and stones: & when he beheld that, he perceived a falsehood of his Wife & cried w a loud voice, Wo be to me, y for my Wifes words I have slain my Pye, & also my solace & joy lost y which in all things said to me truth. And as he had thus done, anon for sorrow he left his merchandise & all his house, & went towards a holy Land, & never turned again towards his Wife. Then a Master said to an Emperor, Sir, have ye understood what I said? He answered, Right well. The Master said, was not a false & cursed Wife, y so by her falsehood, deceit, & cunning caused a Pye to be slain? The Emperor said, In truth she was full of falseness, it pitieth me greatly to think upon the Pye the w for her true saying lost her life. Verily, I say unto you, y you have told me a very fair Example: therefore this day my Son shall not die. Then said a Master, Sir, you do wisely, & I thank you y you have spared your Son this day for my sake, & so to God I commend you.

The fourth Complaint of the Emperess.

When a Emperess heard a child was not dead, she made a great noise & crying, in such wise y she was heard thorough a palace, & said, Wo be unto me, y ever I was made Emperess, y would

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would God that I had died, when I was first brought into these parts. When the *Emperor* heard *y* voice & cry that she made, he entred into the Chamber, & comforted her as much as he could, and demanded the cause of her lamentation. Who said, O mine own Lord, have you no wonder, though *y* I be in this sorrow & agony, for I am your Wife, & in your company by your Son I am ashamed, & ye saw lately *y* bloody marks of his inforcement upon my tender flesh, & you have promised me that he therefore should be hanged, yet he liveth, wherefore should I not be sorry? The *Emperor* answered, Be content & pleased, & I shall do Justice upon my Son to morrow: but *y* I forbare him yesterday, was at the moving of one of his *Masters* by an Example. Then said she, Have you forbid to do justice for one Word? were it so, yet for a Word ye should not let to do justice: & ye say, for *y* Example of one *Master*, ye have left it. I fear me it shall happen to you, & with your *Masters*, as upon a time it fortun'd unto an *Emperor* with his seven Wife Masters. The *Emperor* said, I pray you tell me *y* Example. She said, To what intent should I labor in vain? For yesterday I shewed you a good Example & it availed not: & whatsoever I shew you for your honor & profit, *y* *y* *Masters* of your Son turn up & down to your destruction, & in this present Example I shall clearly show unto you. To whom the *Emperor* said, O my best beloved Lady, tell me that Example, that by *y* same I may the better beware: for though through my Clemency I gave one dayes benefit of life to my Son, I shall not therefore give him his life: for that which is deferred, is not therefore forgiven. And she said, Gladly shall I shew it to you to your profit, and began to tell as it hereafter followeth.

The fourth Example of the Emperess.

Sometime there was in the City of Rome seven Wise *Masters*, by whom all the Empire was Governed and Ruled, & the *Emperor* *y* then was, did never attempt any thing without the counsel of *y* masters: whereupon they (perceiving *y* *y* *Emperor* was so affected and inclined to them, *y* without them he would not ordain or do any thing) devised by their art & cunning, *y* the *Emperor* should clearly see as long as he was in the Palace, but as soon as he was out of the Palace, he should become blind: & *y* did they, to the intent *y* they might the more freely have *y* dealing themselves of all things *y* appertain to *y* *Emperor*: by the which they got & won to them great profit & lucre of goods: & after they had made and wrought *y* experiment, they could never change it, nor undo it afterward, but *y* *Emperor* abode still blind many years. And the seven Wise *Masters* made & Proclaimed throughout the Empire, *y* if any man Dreamed a dream, he should come unto them wth a Florent of Gold or Silver, & they would expound & declare unto him the Interpretation of his Dreams: whereby, & by other unjust means they obtained much more substance & money of the people, then the *Emperor* did

did. So upon a time when he sat at the Table with the *Empress*, he began to sigh & sorrow in himself: and when she perceived that, she inquired diligently of him the cause of his heaviness & dolor. The *Emperor* said, Should it not be heavy & sorrowful unto me, that I so long have been blind, & cannot see out of my Palace, and yet have and find no remedy? To whom spake the *Empress*, & said, Lord hear my counsel, & it shall never repent you, if you do thereafter. In your Court you have seven Wise Masters, by whom ye & all the Empire is governed, if you now behold and mark this in your mind, ye shall find & they are & cause of your blindness, & disease; & if it be so, they are worthy to die a most shameful death: therefore take heed to my counsel & advice: first, send for them, & show to them your disease & infirmity, & threaten them on pain of their lives, that they should find some speedy remedy to help you of your sickness & blindness. This counsel pleased the *Emperor* well. And anon he sent for the Masters, & when they were come, & *Emperor* anon shewed unto them his infirmity & blindness, & charged them on pain of death, & they should presently seek some remedy to ease him thereof. Then answered they, Ye desire of us a thing & is difficult & hard to be done thus shortly, but give us respite for ten days, and then we will give you your full answer. The *Emperor* was therewithal well contented & pleased: then the seven Wise Masters went to counsel, how they may restore unto him his sight again: And in no manner of wise could they find the means how to put away the blindness from the *Emperor*, wherefore they were all right sorrowful, and said among themselves, Without we find a remedy, we are all but dead men. So they went from thence throughout all & Empire, & sought if they could find any remedy or counsel therefore. It happened them upon a time going through & City, & in & midst thereof, they found Children playing: And after them came a man with a Talent or Florent of Gold, and said to them, Good Masters, this night have I Dreamed a Dream, the Interpretation whereof I would fain know: wherefore I pray you shew me what it signifieth, & take this Gold to you. That heard one of & Children & played among the other; who said unto him, give me the Gold, & then I shall expound the Dream. The man said, I have Dreamed this Night, that in the midst of my Orchard was a great spring of Water: whereof came many small springs & all mine Orchard was full, & overflown w Water: The Child said, take a Spade & dig in the same place whereas you thought that & Water sprang out, & there shall ye find a Hoord of Gold, so great, that you & all your Children & lineage shall be for ever Rich. The man did as the Child had shewed him, & found & Treasure according to his Words. Then went & man to & Child, & melted him a pound weight of & Gold that he had found, for & Interpretation of & Dream, but he would receive none, but committed

mitted him to *ſ* prayers of the man. The seven *Wise Masters*, when they heard *ſ* Child ſo wiſely Expounded *ſ* Dream, they ſaid to him, good Child, what is your name? He answered and ſaid, I am called *Merlin*. Then ſaid *ſ* Masters, We ſee ſurely great Wiſdom in you, we ſhall ſhew unto you a ſtrange matter, and of *ſ* we would gladly *ſ* ye could find a remedy. The Child ſaid, Shew unto me your matter? And they ſaid, The *Emperor of Rome*, as long as he is in *ſ* Palace, he hath his ſight clear w^out any impediment, but as ſoon as he is gone out of *ſ* Palace, he is ſo blind *ſ* he cannot ſee. Now if ye can find out *ſ* cauſe thereof, & give preſent remedy whereby he may be healed, and have his ſight again, ye ſhall have a great reward and honor of the *Emperor*. Then answered the Child, I know as well the cauſe of the blindneſs, as *ſ* remedy. Then ſaid all unto him, Come with us to *ſ* *Emperor* and ye ſhall be rewarded ſo largely, that ye ſhall be pleaſed. To whom *ſ* Child ſaid, I am ready to go with you. And when they came w^o *ſ* Child before *ſ* *Emperor*, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſo, here is *ſ* Child *ſ* we have brought before you, *ſ* which ſhall fulfill your deſire touching *ſ* cauſe of your blindneſs, & the recovering of your ſight. The *Emperor* ſaid, Good *Masters*, will you take it upon you, & abide thereby, *ſ* the Child ſhall perform this attempt? Then all ſaid, yea, for we are expert in his Wiſdom. The *Emperor* turned himſelf towards *ſ* Child & ſaid, Will you undertake to tell me *ſ* cauſe of my blindneſs, & the remedy? The Child answered & ſaid, my Lord *ſ* *Emperor*, lead me unto your Bed-chamber, & there I ſhall ſhew you, what is to be done: & as he was therein brought, he ſaid to his Servants, Take off the clothes off the bed and all *ſ* apparel, & ye ſhall ſee wonders. And as that was done, they ſaw a Well ſmoaking *ſ* had ſeven Springs or Floods, *ſ* which when *ſ* *Emperor* ſaw he marvelled greatly. The Child ſaid, Ye ſee this Well, & w^out it be quenched, ye ſhall never have your ſight. The *Emperor* ſaid, How may that be? The Child ſaid, But by one way. The *Emperor* ſaid, Shew us then the means, & if it be poſſible to me, it ſhall be done, that I may recover again my ſight, as well without, as within. To whom *ſ* Child ſaid, My Lord, the ſeven Springs of this Well are theſe ſeven *Wise Masters*, who hitherto have traiterouſly governed you and your Empire, & have made you blind as you be w^out your Palace, *ſ* they your ſubjects by extortion, might pill & pole you, not ſeeing it. But now they know not *ſ* remedy, therefore hear you now my counſel, & this Well ſhall be quenched & extinct: ſtrike off *ſ* firſt *Masters* head, & anon ye ſhall ſee *ſ* firſt ſpring quench, & ſo by order one after another, till *ſ* they are all beheaded, & anon all *ſ* ſprings with *ſ* Well, ſhall be vaniſhed & gone away, & ye ſhall have again your ſight as you had before: & when this was done & fulfilled, *ſ* Well w^o *ſ* ſeven Springs was vaniſhed. And as *ſ* *Emperor* had his ſight again, he made

the Child a great Lord, & gave him great abundance of goods. And after spake the *Empress*, my Lord, have ye well perceived this Example, that I have told you. And he said, Yea, in the best wise, & ye have received a worthy & good Example. Then said she in the same manner, Your seven *Wise Masters* intended to do with you, with their false Narration, that your Son may reign over your Empire, which God forbid.

The Declaration of the Example.

THIS Well is your Son whereout floweth seven springs, that signifyeth *ſeven Wise Masters*, & which Son ye may not destroy without *ſeven Wise Masters* be made feeble and brought to nought: that done, this Well, that is your Son with all his wiles shall not escape, but let him taste his death which befits his deserts, & are shameful, lest he have a help of his *Masters*, & after consequently *ſeven Masters*: and so ye shall govern and guide your Empire in rest and peace. The *Emperor* anone commanded his Servants to lead his Son to the gallows which they were loath to do. So was there then a great Multitude of people gathered with great noise and bewailing, so that *ſ* noise came to *ſ* ear of the fourth *Master* named *Malquidrate*, the which leapt upon his Horse, & hasted him to *ſ* Palace where he meet with his disciple, & did reverence to him, & commended him unto him: and when he came before the *Emperor*, and had done his obeysance and reverence, as appertained, the *Emperor* then answered, & said, little thanks shall you have, you old cursed carter, for so ill teaching my Son, I delivered you my son well-speaking, and in all things right vertuous, but ye have sent him home a fool, dumb, & a ribauld, for he would hath lyen with my wife by force, and therefore all ye forth-with together with him shall be hanged. Then said the *Master*, my Lord, I have not deserved to ill of you, God knoweth why your Son speaketh not, in short time you shall perceive other things, but the time is not yet come: but in that you say he would have oppressed your wife, *ſ* is not truth, nor proved, neither for one single person should you judge your Son to death: If now for the words of your wife you judge your Son to die, it shall be worse to you, then to a certain old man and his wife, and that I shall well prove. To whom *ſ* *Emperor* said, I think you do with me, as sometimes seven wise men did to an *Emperor*. Whereunto said the *Master*, the offence or trespass of one or yet of twenty, may not sound to the rebuke and blame of all other: but one thing of a truth I shall shew you that evil shall come to you, if ye this day put your Son to death for the words of your wife, of the which I could shew a notable example. Then said the *Emperor*, Will ye recite that for my learning: The *Master* said, If ye will call again your Son from death, then will I rehearse the example, or else not. The *Emperor* commanded that he should be called again, and he desired the *Master* to say as hereafter followeth.

The

There was an old *Knight* and a right wife man, & lived long without wife or child, his friends came to him oftentimes and counselled and exhorted him that he should take a wife.

The *Knight* thus counselled and stirred by his friends so oftentimes, at the last he agreed to them, and they gave him to wife the daughter of the *Provest* of *Rome*, that was rich and of comely grace and feature, whom when he had seen, anon he was made blind and taken in her love, and began to love her marvelously well, and when they had been married a certain space together, and had no child: Upon a time in a morning it happened & she went to & Church, where she met wth her mother, who said, my daughter, how pleaseth you your marriage, and your husband? She said, Right well, for you have given to me an old lame man to my discontentment in all respects, and I would ye had & same time buried me, for I had rather lye and eat wth a swine, than with him, and therefore I may no longer thus endure, but I must needs love another. Then said her mother, God forbid &, my dear daughter: How long time have I been with your Father, & yet never hitherto have I meddled with such foolishness? The daughter said, It is no marvel, for you both met in your youth together, and the one took solace of the other, but I can of him receive no manner of corporal pleasure for he is cold, and on & bed he lyeth as still as a stone, or as a thing immovable. The mother answered, If you love another, tell me what he is? The daughter said, I will love a *Priest*. To whom the mother said, It were better, and less sin for you to love a *Knight* or a *Squire*? she said, In short time he would be weary of me, and after & he would do me shame, and so will not & Priest, for he will hold & keep his own honor & counsel as well as mine: also spiritual men be more true to their lovers than secular men be. The mother said, Hear my counsel, & it will be for your good. Old folk are wily and fell, tempt your husband first, and if you scape him without doing you harm, or smiting, then love the *Priest*. The daughter said, I may not so long abide. The mother said, Upon my blessing abide till you have proved. The daughter said, upon your blessing I will abide so long till I have attempted him, but first tell me, how I shall prove him? The mother said, He hath in his Orchard a tree w^{ch} he loveth much, cause it to be smitten down while he is out at hunting, & against his coming home make him a fire therewith, & if he forgive it you, then may you surely love & Priest. As she heard & counsel of her mother, she went home to whom her husband said, Where have you been so long? She answered, I have been at the Church, where I met with my mother, and wth her I have a little talked & communed, & so began properly to dissemble: After mid-day & Knight rode forth to hunt, then she thinking upon the Counsel of her mother, went to the Gardiner, & said to him, Cut down this young tree newly planted, that I may make a fire thereof

thereto warm my Lord Wall at his coming from hunting, for it is a great wind and sharp and cold. The Gardiner said, *Madam*, that I will not do, for my Lord loveth this tree better than he doth all the other trees, nevertheless I shall well help you to gather wood enough for to make a good fire, but in any case this I will not hew down. As she heard that, then boldly she took the ax from the Gardiner, and hewed down the tree her self, and made the Gardiner with others to bear it home. At evening, when her Lord came from hunting, he was very cold, and she made a great fire, and went and met with him, and set him a stool before the fire to warm him, & as he a little while had sitten, he perceived the odor of the fire, & called to him *ŷ Gardiner*, and said, I feel by this odor that the new plant burneth in *ŷ* fire. The Gardiner said, *Lord*, it is true, my *Lady*, your wife hath felled it down. The *Knight* said unto her, God forbid *ŷ* my plant should be cut down by you. She answered anon, & said, *Lord*, I have done it, knowing the weather cold, & you also cold, & therefore I have ordained this fire for your comfort. And as the *Knight* heard *ŷ*, he looked angry upon her & said, O cursed woman, how was thou so obdurate, relentless & void of pity, as to hew down so gentle a young tree, *ŷ* which thou knowest well that I loved it above all my other trees? When he had so said, she began to weep, & excuse her self, and said, my *Lord*, I have done it for your good, & do you take it so grievously? and began to cry, Wo, wo be to me. Anon as the *Knight* saw the weeping and tears of his wife, & heard the cause, he was moved wth pity, & said unto her, Cease off your weeping, & beware how *ŷ* you do anger me any more, or trouble me in any thing *ŷ* I love. The next day early in *ŷ* morning she went again to the Church-yard, and met wth her mother coming home, & they saluted each other. Then *ŷ* daughter said to her mother, O dear mother, I will love the *Priest*, for I have attempted my lord as you counselled me, but all for nought, for he anon forgave it when he saw me a little weep. Then said the mother, Though old men for one time forgive, they double the pain another time, and therefore I counsel you, *ŷ* you yet once again attempt him. Then said the daughter, I may no longer abide, for I suffer so much pain for the love of the *Priest*, that wth my tongue I cannot tell it, therefore you shall pardon me, I will no more follow nor do after your counsels: Then said *ŷ* mother, for the love that the child should have unto *ŷ* mother, attempt him yet once more for your Fathers blessing, & then if you go quietly wthout any harm or beating, love *ŷ* *Priest* in the name of God. Then answered the daughter, It is to me great pain so long time to abide, nevertheless, for the blessing of my Father I will once more attempt him, but tell me how I shall begin? The mother said, I understand that he hath a little hound *ŷ* he loveth well, & keepeth his bed, cast *ŷ* hound with so great might before his face against the wall that it die, & if ye escape

without

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without a stripe or *þ* he forgive you it lightly, then in *þ* name of God love the *Priest*. Then the daughter said, I will in all things do after your counsel, for there is no daughter living at this day that would more gladly have the blessing of the Father and mother than I, and so she bade her mother farewell, & went to her house again, and that day wth great importunity and trouble of her heart, she brought to the night: and when the night was come, she commanded the bed to be covered with purple & cloath of gold, whilst the *Knight* sat by the fire: and when the bed was thus made ready, the little hound as he was accustomed did leap upon the bed, and she took him by the hinder legs, and with a wood and malicious heart, she cast him against the wall, that it lay still dead: when the good old *Knight* saw that, he was marvelously angry, and said wth a loud voice to his wife, O thou most cruel and spightful of all wicked women, how couldst thou find in thine heart to kill *þ* gentle hound & I loveth so much? Lord, said she, have you not seen how the hound with his feet (coming out of the mire) berayed our bed, & is so preciouslly covered with rich cloths? And the *Knight* said with much anger, know you not that I loved much better my little hound than *þ* bed? When she heard that, anon she began piteously to weep, & said, Wo be to me that ever I was born, for all things that I do for the best, it is all turned to the worst. The *Knight* out of the treatnre of his goodness and pity would not suffer the weeping and lamentation of his wife, but for *þ* he loved her so well, he said unto her, Cease your weeping, for I forgive it you altogether: and I counsel you that you beware how that you displease me from henceforth, and so they went to bed together.

Upon the morrow she rose up very early, & went to *þ* Church, where she met wth her mother, to whom when she had done reverence as it behoved, she said, Mother, now will I love the *Priest*, for I have attempted my husband the second time, and all things he hath suffered. The mother said, O my dear daughter, there is no cruelty or falshood above the cruelty of old folks, and therefore I counsel you, *þ* you yet once more prove him to whom the daughter answered, Mother, ye labour in vain, for if you wist what and how much pains I suffer for the *Priests* love, ye should rather help me, if you loved me. The mother said, Hear me daughter this one time, & I shall never let you more, Think how you have sucked milk out of my breasts, and the great pain that I have suffered for you at your birth, by these pains, my dear daughter, I desire and charge you, that you deny not this good petition, and I promise you no more, to let you, nor hinder you of your intent, but rather to help you therefore. Then answered the daughter, It is to my great pain to abstain me, & to forbear my self so long from the love of the *Priest*: nevertheless for *þ* great charge that ye have laid to me, & also for *þ* ye have made a vow no more to let me, but to further me, tell me how I might attempt him,

and

and I shall once more give the adventure? The mother said, I know well that on Sunday next coming he intendeth to have us all at dinner, and there shall be your Father and I, and all your friends, wall the rest of the City, and when you are set in your place, and all the meats are brought and served upon the Table, fasten your keys privily & hang at your girdle in the table-cloth, and then do you feign to have forgotten your knife, & say these words openly; See what a short wit I am of, I have forgotten my knife in my chamber: and then rise up hastily & go, and & cloth with all the meats, you shall cast down, and overthrow upon & ground: and if ye escape without pain, I make a vow to God that I shall never let you after. The Daughter said, that I shall gladly do, and so took her leave & departed. The feast day came, and all as the mother said was bid. The servant made ready and covered the Table, all were set at Table, and the daughter sat over against her Lord: and when the Table was well served & meats and other things thereto belonging, the Lady of the house said with a loud voice, See how forgetful I am, I have left my knife in my chamber, which I must fetch, and so rose up hastily and drew the cloth with all the meat upon it with her, and all & gold vessels and salts fell upon the ground: the Knight waxed so angry in heart, but for shame dissembled before the guests, & commanded another clean cloth, and other meats to be brought, and & joy and mirth, he saluted his guests to eat and make good cheer, that by him they were all made merry. The feast or dinner done, they gave all thanks to the Knight, & took their leave & departed every man towards his own house. Upon the next day in morning the Knight rose early and went to the Church and heard service, after which he went to a Barber, and said unto him; Sir, are you expert in blood-letting, in what vein & I will desire you? he said Sir, I am expert in what vein & you can name in a mans body. The Knight said, I am well content, come with me: & when he was come to his house, he entred into his chamber where his wife lay in bed, and said unto her, Rise up shortly: then said she, what shall I do up so early, it is not yet nine of the clock? The Knight said, You must rise up for you must be letten blood in both your arms: she said I was never letten blood, and shall I now bled? then said the Knight, That is truth, and therefore ye are a fool. Remember ye not & first ye hewed down my Tree, and another time ye killed my little Hound, & yesterday you shamed me before all my friends and Parents: and the fourth is, If & I should suffer you thus to go on, you should for ever confound and shame me. The cause hereof I consider, & you have evil & wild blood within your body, and therefore I will & & corrupt blood shall be drawn out & ye from henceforth shall put me to no more shame and anger, & so caused to be made a great fire: & she stood & cryed, & held up her hands towards heaven, & said,

My

My Lord, forgive my trespasses, & have pity upon me at this time, and I will never more offend you. The *Knight* said, Pray for no mercy, for the mercy & God hath wrought towards thee at this present, is this, that except thou holdest our thine arm straight, I shall soon have thy heart blood: and he said also to the Barber, Smite hard, and make a deep hole in her arm, or else I shall give you a great stripe: then smote the Barber to fore & the blood came abundantly out, and & *Knight* would not suffer him to stanch it, until & time & she changed her color in her visage, and this was done, he bade it be stoped, and willed the Barber to smite the vein upon the other arm: Then she cryed w a very loud voice, my sweet husband, I pray you have compassion upon me, for now I die: The *Knight* answered, Wife, you should have thought upon this before, ere you had done to me these three evil torments, or despights. Then she held out her left arm, & the Barber smote therein a great hole, & the blood came out right ugly, and he suffered her to bleed untill the time & the color of her visage was changed, and & she fainted: Then said the *Knight*, Now bind her arm, and stanch it, and said unto her, Now go to bed and study, and think henceforth how ye may amend your life, or else I shall draw the blood of your heart: and as this was done, he gave the Barber his reward, and then he went again unto his own house: and his wife being under the hands of her maids nigh dead, was led to her bed; she bade one of her maidens go to her mother in all haste, and say that I desire her to come speak & me before I die: the mother when she had heard &, was glad of the correction of her daughter, and came hastily to her. When & daughter heard her Mother, she said, O my sweet mother, I am almost dead, for I have bled so much blood, that I believe I shall not escape the death. Then answered the mother, said I not unto you that old men are right cruel and fell? Will you now love & *Priest*? She said, the devil may the *Priest* confound & shame, I will never love other but my husband. Then said & *Master* to the *Emperor*, Lord, have ye understood me? And he answered, Right well, for amongst all other & ever I have heard, this was the best example. Three evil deeds she did unto her husband, & I doubt not, but if she had done & fourth, she would have shamed him for ever. Then said the *Master*, Therefore I counsel you & you beware of your wife, lest it happen worse to you, & appears most manifestly in this example, if you put to death your only Son for her words, you shall be deceived in the end, & so for ever ye shall repent it. The *Emperor* said, Truly *Master* this day my Son shall not die. The *Master* said, My Lord, I thank you, that for mine example and my sake this day have spared your only Son.

The fifth Complaint of the Empress.

THE *Empress* hearing that the child was not yet dead, forthwith apparelled her self, and she caused her wains & carts to be in readiness.

madness, as though she would have gone home into her own Countrey to her Father, for to have complained of y great shame that was done unto her, and yet could have no remedy thereof. The Servants seeing that, went & shewed to y Emperor y the Empress was going into her Countrey: when he perceived that, he went to her, saying, Whether are you going? I hoped that ye had loved me so much, that in all the world you would have sought no solace but with me. To that she said, That is true, & therefore I go from you, for I had rather hear of your death then to see you die: without doubt you delight so much to hear these Masters, that it shall happen to you, as it did to Cravianus the Emperor, the which was so covetous that y noble men of the Empire buried him quick, & filled his mouth full of molten Gold. The Emperor said, Dear Wife, do not so, y another time the blame to you and me might be laid. Then said the Empress, Truly, Sir, the blame is yours: for have you not promised me many times that your Son should die, and yet he liveth? And therefore from henceforth I will no more believe you. Then said the Emperor, It becometh not a King every cause lightly to discuss without great advice, and especially upon his Son, upon whom it is not meet but upon deliberation, good counsel, and advisedness to pass judgement, & therefore I say, and pray you, that you will tell me somewhat by the which I may govern my life, for it is the utter destruction of a King, without advice and undiscreetly to give judgement. She answered and said, I will gladly tell you a notable Example, so that from henceforth ye will not be covetous or desirous to hear the Masters, and so began to say in this form following.

The fifth Example of the Empress.

O Cravianus the Emperor, reigned in Rome right Rich, and covetous, & above all things he loved Gold: the Citizens of Rome all that time did much harm, and many great outrages to other Nations, insomuch that divers Nations & Regions were moved and stirred against the Romans. In that time there was Master Virgilius, the which excelled in magick and other sciences, and other Masters: the Citizens prayed him that he by his art & cunning, would devise somewhat by the which they of their Enemies might have warning & knowledge before-hand, whereby that they might provide for themselves the better. He made by his art & cunning a Tower, & above upon the Tower, did cause to be set as many Images, as in all the World were Regions & Provinces: and in the midst of the Tower, he let to be made and set an Image which held in his hand an apple, or a great round ball of Gold. And every Image of the Tower held in his hand a little bell, & stood turning and looking towards his own province to him assigned & as oftentimes as any province would stir and rebel against the Romans, so often turned him to the Image of the Land, & rung the bell: that hearing, y Citizens of

Rome armed themselves, and to that Province basted with all their might, the same to subdue: & so there was no land so great, that could wreak them upon the *Romans*, & therefore were they dreaded & feared over all the World. Also *ſ* Master *Virgil* made for the solace and comfort of the poor People, a light that always burned, and by that light he made two Bathis, the one of them hot, in the which *ſ* poor People might bath & wash themselves: and the other cold, in the which they might themselves refresh. Betwixt that light and the Bathis, he made an Image standing, in whose fore-head was Written, He that smitteth me, shall anon have vengeance. The Image stood there many years, and at *ſ* last there came a Clerk, and he beheld the Image, & read the writing, and thought in himself, what vengeance he might find therefore: I believe better that if any man should smite thee, and that thou fallest therewith to the earth, he shall find some treasure under thy feet, and therefore is the writing, that no man should have it. And the Clerk lift up his hand, and gave the Image a great stroak, that it fell to the ground: And anon the light was out, and the bathis were vanished away, and he found no treasure. The poor folks perceiving that, were all sorrowfull, and said bitter curses and complaints upon him, that for his singular covetousness had destroyed the Image, and had robbed them of so great a solace & comfort. Hereafter assembled three Kings, the which by the *Romans* had been oppressed, and suffered great wrongs, and went to take counsel with them of their Counsel, how they might best be avenged of the *Romans*: And some of them said, We do labor in vain, for as long as there standeth the Tower with the Images, we cannot do any thing against them.

At the Counsel arose up four Knights, and said to the Kings, We have thought on a good remedy how ye shall destroy *ſ* Tower with the Images: and that for to do and bring about, we will our lives set to pledge if that you will be at the cost. Then said the Kings, What cost shall we be at? They answered, We must have four runs of Gold. Then said the Kings, Take the Gold, and fulfill your promise, and the Knights took the Gold, and went towards Rome, and when that they were come thither in the night, without one of the gates, in the ditch full of water, they drowned one or *ſ* runs with the Gold in it, and another tun they drowned by the second gate, & the third run they drowned by the third gate, & the fourth tun by *ſ* fourth gate they drowned: And when they had thus done, early in the morning they entered into *ſ* City at an hour convenient, & as *ſ* Emperor went over to the Mart, they did him reverence as it behoved: the *Emperors* seeing them, demanded from whence they were, of what science, & what service they could do? And they answered, We are all of far Countries, and sooth-sayers so perfect, that there is never a thing so privily & secretly hid, but *ſ* we shall find it out by our dreams. We have heard that ye labor and have pleasure in such things,
and

and therefore we came unto you, to know if you had need of our service. The *Emperor* said, I shall prove you, & if it be so that I find you true, you shall have of me great rewards and thanks. They said, We ask nothing for our labors, but the halfe deal of y Gold which by us shall be found. The *Emperor* said, I am very well content; and thus they had w y *Emperor* many words. At night when the *Emperor* was going to bed, they said to him, My Lord, if it please you, this night shall the eldest of us set his cunning a work, & Dream, the third day he shall shew you his Dream & what it signifieth. The *Emperor* said, Go in Gods Name. And they went forth with great gladness, & all this night they passed over w y great joy & mirth, upon trust they should come to a good purpose. When y third day was come, they went early unto the *Emperor*: the first of them said, My Lord, please it you to go with us w y out one of the gates of the Citie, & I shall shew where there is a tun full of Gold hid. The *Emperor* said, I shall go with you, and see if it be true that you say. And when they were come to the place they drew out y tun that they before there had put. The *Emperor* when he saw that, was glad, and gave them their part. Then said the second Dreamer, My Lord, this night shall I Dream. Then the *Emperor* said, God give you a good Dream. The next night came, & he took out y other tun. & gave it to the *Emperor*, & took also his share. In like manner did the third, & the fourth: upon the which y *Emperor* was out of all measure joyous & glad, & said, He had not seen heretofore such true and expert sooth-sayers, and dreamers, as they were. Then said they altogether at once, as it had been out of one mouth: My Lord, we have one after another Dreamed the which as ye have seen, they be all proved: but now if it please you, that we may Dream altogether this night, we trust y to us shall be shewed where we shall find a great quantitie & substance of Gold & of Riches. The *Emperor* said, God give you a good dream, which to me and to you may be profitable. On the next morrow they came again unto the *Emperor*, and said unto him with countenances full of joy and gladness, My Lord, we bring good & profitable tydings, for this night in our sleeps, such & so great a treasure is to us shewed, y which if you will suffer it to be sought, you shall be so much enriched that in this World shall be none like unto you. The *Emperor* said, Where should we find treasure? They said, Under the foundation of the Tower that the Images stand upon. The *Emperor* answered, God defend, that I should for love of Gold destroy the Tower, with the Images, wherewith we from our Enemies be defended & warned. They said to him again, My Lord, have you found us in our sayings otherwise than true and rightfull? The *Emperor* said, Nay; Oh Lord, said they, We with our own hands shall give out the Gold without hurting the Tower or the Images. And it is expedient, that secretly in the night by us it be done, for dread of resort and concourse of the People, lest that

It should run in the noie & clamors of them, and also that they should not take that good Gold away from you & us. The *Emperer* said, Go in the Name of God, & do your best as you will or can, and I shall to morrow early come to you. Then went they with joy & gladness, and in the night they were let into the Tower, & then with great haste and diligence they undermined it, & on the next day very early in the morning, they mounted upon their Horses, and rode again towards their own Countrey with great joy and glory. And ere they came without the sight of *Rome*, y^e Tower fell down on the morning ensuing.

When it was fallen, & the *Senators* it perceived, they sorrowed greatly, and there was a great bewailing throughout all the City, and they went unto the *Emperer*, and said, Lord, how may it be y^e this Tower is thus fallen, by the which we have always had warning afore of our Enemies: He answered and said, To me came four false deceivers, & feigned themselves to be sooth-sayers, & that they could find treasure in the ground; and they said, That under the foundation of y^e Tower was hid a sum of Gold, y^e which they should undermine about hurting of the Tower of Images, & I gave faith to them, and they have deceived me. They answered him, Ye have coveted so much Gold, that for your uncharitable covetousness we shall all be destroyed: but first your covetousness shall fall upon your self: they took and led him to the Capitol, & laid him on his back, and poured his mouth full of molten Gold, saying to him, You have desired Gold, & therefore ye shall drink Gold: and after they buried him quick. Not long after that, came the Enemy against the *Romans*, and overcame and destroyed them all. Then said the *Empress* unto the *Emperer*, Have ye my Lord, this Example well understood: And he said, Right well. Then, said she, The Tower with Images, is your Body with five Wits: As long as you do live, there is none so hardie to trouble or make War upon you, nor upon your People: that hath your Son right well understood with the seven *Masters*, and with their false Narrations of fables, seek how they may destroy you, for you are over much covetous to hear and incline to them, in so much that they shall undermine you, and cast you under foot, & bring you to nought. The Images are your five Wits, that be all lost. And forasmuch as you be so Childish and Foolish, they shall destroy and slay you, and your Son shall obtain your Empire.

The *Emperer* said, Ye have recited to me a good Example, wherefore it shall not happen to me as it did with y^e Tower, but my Son first this day shall taste the bitterness of death. To whom the *Empress* said, If ye do so, ye shall speed well, and live long. Upon y^e same day he commanded him to be led to hangings: & as he was led towards the gallows, came riding against him upon an Horse, the fifth *Master*, towards y^e Palace, & came before the *Emperer* and saluted him with all reverence, but he despised his salutation,

The seven Wise Masters.

and put him in fear of his life. And the *Master* said unto the *Emperor*, My Lord, I have not deserved to die, and so to despise my salutation, it is not for your honor: for your Son hath not with us been of such condition, as ye repute him, as ye in short time shall find: and if he speaketh not, it is of his great Wisdom: and know ye, that he shall well speak as his time cometh, though that he now speaketh not, as you in short time shall hear. But forasmuch as that he would have shamed your Wife, that believeth not, for so wise a man as he is, would never attempt so shameful a deed: and if ye put him to death for your Wifes words, ye shall not escape without shame & vengeance, like as *Ippocras* escaped not without vengeance for the death of *Galienus* his Cousin. The *Emperor* said, That would I fain hear and understand. Then said the *Master*, What would it avail me to tell you this Narration for your profit, if in the mean season your Son shall die: Wherefore if you will call again your Son, it shall be discovered at your pleasure, and after do ye as ye think best. The *Emperor* bade call again his Son, and set him in prison, and then began the *Master* to tell on this manner, as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the fifth Master.

Sometimes there was a Famous Physician named *Ippocras*, right cunning, the which excelled all other in learning and science: he had with him his Nephew, or Kinsman, & was called *Galienus*, the which he loved so much. This *Galienus* was of an excellent Wit, and applyed all his mind and Wit to learn of his Uncle the Science of Physick. When *Ippocras* perceived that, inasmuch as he could, he hid from him his cunning, fearing that he should excel him in that knowledge, for the great Wit that he was of. As *Galienus* saw this, he studied and exercised inasmuch that in short time he had perfect cunning in Physick, for which *Ippocras* envied him much. It happened upon a time thereafter that the King of Hungary sent his Messenger unto *Ippocras*, that he should come unto him for to cure his Son. *Ippocras* excused himself, and would not go, but sent his Cousin *Galienus* with his Letters of excuse for his not coming. And when *Galienus* was come before the King, he was right worshipfully received, and they marvelled why that *Ippocras* would not come. He excused him, saying, That he had many great things to do: and he might not come, but he hath sent me in his stead, & with the help of God, I shall make whole the Child: that pleased very well the King. *Galienus* went to the Child, and when he had seen his Urine, and touched his pulses, he said to the Queen, O excellent Princess, I pray you hear, and suffer my words, and tell me who is the Father of this Child? She said, Who should be his Father, but my Lord, the King? *Galienus* said, I am sure he is not the Father. She answered, If you say that for a truth, I shall cause your head to be smote off. He answered,

I say once again, that this King is not the father, and I am not therefore come hither to lose my head, for I have not deserved any such reward, and so was going his way. The Queen spake, O good Master *Galienus*, if ye will keep it secret, and not discover me, I shall shew and open unto you my heart. The Master said, God defend that from me, that I to any person should shew it, and therefore, O noble Queen, shew it boldly to me, for it shall never pass my mouth, and afterwards I shall ease and make your Son whole. She said, If ye do that, ye shall have a good reward of me, and hear therefore what I shall say. By fortune I came hither unto my Lord the King of *Burgundy*, and he was so long conversant with me, that this Child by him I bare. Then said the Master, Fear ye not, I knew that it was so before. And anon he gave the Child medicines & compounded things whereof to eat and drink, and the Child was eased of his infirmity. And when as the King heard, that the Child was cured and recovered of his sickness, he gave unto the Master a good reward, but of the Queen he secretly received a great gift, and special thanks, and so went his way. And when that he was come home, *Ippocras* his Master demanded of him, saying, Have ye beheld the Child? And he said, Yea. Then asked he him what he gave him, either compounded, or uncompounded things? Then said *Ippocras*, That Woman of the Child is not true to her Husband. That is truth, said *Galienus*. Then *Ippocras* was moved with envy, and thought in himself, if there be not found a remedy, my Science shall be no more be set by, but he shall be named & praised above me. And from that day forward he bethought him, & advised how he might slay him. Upon a day *Ippocras* called him, and said, Come, go with me to seek and gather herbs in the garden. To whom he said, Master, I am ready: and when they were come into the garden, *Ippocras* said, I feel that this herb is righte vertuous, stoop down, and gather me of it. And *Galienus* did so: and as they went about the garden, said *Ippocras*, Now I well perceive the odor of this herb, that it is better and more precious then Gold, and therefore stoop down to the ground, and draw him out wth y^e root, for it is much worth. *Galienus* bowed down himself to pull out the Herb, and *Ippocras* drew out his Knife and killed him. After that, *Ippocras* fell sick to the death, that the strength of his body failed him, and did as much as he could to help himself, but that could not be: and as the Scholars and Disciples heard of it, they went hastily unto him, & did all that they might or could do for the profit of his health, but it availed them nothing.

When *Ippocras* this perceived, he said unto the Scholars, Go fetch me a great tun and fill it full to the brim with water: and when they had so done, he said unto them, Make therein an hundred holes, and when that was also done, there went none of the water out. Then said *Ippocras*, Behold my most dear disciples,

riples, how that the vengeance of God is fallen upon me, as you may openly see, for in this tun are an hundred holes, and yet goeth not therout any drop: Right so there cometh no vertue out of the Herbs to help me: and therefore what you do unto me helpeth not, for I must die. But my dear Children, if my Nephew *Galenus* were now alive, he could heal me, whom I have slain, and that grieveth me sore, & therefore the vengeance of God cometh upon me: And this said, he turned him to the Wall, and gave up the Ghost. Then said the Master unto the Emperor, My Lord, understand ye well what I have said? He answered, Yea, right well: what hurt had it been to him if *Galenus* had lived?

The Master answered, It had been right good for *Iphocras* at that time, had he not dyed, and therefore by right wise Judgement of God, his Medicine availed him not, and therefore I shewed to you that it shall happen worse to you, if that you put to death your Son for the words of your Wife, who in time of necessity shall assist and succour you. And consider ye not, that ye have after the first Wife Wedded this Wife that ye now have, & so ye may the third & fourth, and never shall ye have of any of them such a Son, that shall keep and save you from peril. The Emperor said, Truly he shall not die.

Then said the Master, Then do ye that which both becomes the Wisdom of your Years, and the Royalty of your Person: and I commend you to God, and I thank you that you have this day for me spared your Son, the Emperor said, I mark this well, that Women are crafty and subtil, therefore I will not for you, but for my self save him.

The sixth Complaint of the Empress.

When as the Empress had knowledge thereof, she shewed her self so froward and impatient a body, that all that saw her or heard her, wondred, and said to the Emperor, Your Wife she pineth away her self, as though she would shortly die. The Emperor hearing thereof, went to her and said, Wherefore (good Lady) be ye so impatient? she answered, saying, O Lord, how should I hold it in, when I am the only Daughter of a King and your Wife, and in your company I have had a great despite and shame, and continually you have promised me to punish him, but yet you perform it not. The Emperor said, I wot not what I shall do: ye labour from day to day to have my Son put to death, and the Masters labor to save his life: and amongst all these, I know well that he is my Son, but where the truth is, that I know not. Then said she, This is the cause whereof I complain that ye believe the Masters more then ye do me, and therefore it shall happen to you, as it did to a King with his Steward.

Then said the Emperor, Tell me that Example, peradventure it may move me the sooner to put my Son to death. She said, Gladly,

Gladly, but I pray you give attention to what I shall say, and began to tell, as hereafter ensueth.

The fifth Example of the Empress.

THere was a King most proud and deformed in his Visage, in such wise, that all Women hated him. This King thought to destroy all *Rome*, and to take and carry away the Bodies of *Peter* and *Paul*: Who while he was in this mind, called to him his Steward that was right secret with him of his Privy Counsel, and said to him, Go and seek a Fair-Woman, that this night may sleep with me. The Steward answered, My Lord, ye know well your infirmity, and disease, and that no Woman, will do Evil without a great Sum of Money. The King said, think you that for my Money I will want one? Have I not Gold and Silver enough? though it were a thousand Florents, I would it gladly give. The Steward hearing that, was anone smitten with Covetousness, and went to his own Wife, which was right Fair and Chaste, and of good kindred, and said to her, O my good Wife, my Lord desireth & coveteth for to sleep with a fair and Beautiful Woman, and will not forbear it, though that she would ask of him a thousand Florents, and hath commanded me to provide him one. And therefore I counsel you, that ye to us get that Money. The Wife said, Were it so & the King were not so proud & so full of Visage, yet would I not to that Evil consent, for the sin against God. The Steward said, I counsel & command you, and promise you that without you consent to me herein, you shall never hereafter have good day with me: she hearing that, trembled, in so much that for fear she consented unto him.

The Steward then went to the King, and said, Sir, I have found out a Fair-Woman, and she is come of a very good House, which will not less have then a thousand Florents: And in the evening she shall come, and early in the Morning she must away, that she be not seen of the People. The King answered & said, I am well contented. When the night was come, the Steward led his Wife to the King's bed, and made fast the door, and so went his way: early in the Morning the Steward arose, & went to the King, and said, My Lord, it will be day within a while, it is good that you perform your promise, and let the Woman go: The King said, This Woman pleaseth me so well, that so soon she shall not depart from me. When he heard that, he departed thence all sory, and tarried but a while: and came to the King again, and said, My Lord, the Morning is come: therefore let the Woman go as I have promised her, lest she be ashamed. The King said, Yet shall she not go from me, & therefore go out and shut the door again. The Steward right sorrowfull departed: and went up and down with an heavy and angry heart, till that the fair and clear day appeared, and then he entered again into the Chamber, and said, My Lord, It is clearly day,

day, suffer the woman to depart, & she be not therewith ashamed. The King answered, I say to you of a truth, she shall not yet depart, for her company is to me right pleasing and acceptable. The steward hearing that, could no longer forbear to hold his own counsel, but said to the King, O my good and gracious Lord, I beseech you suffer her to depart, for it is mine own wife. The King hearing that, said to him, Open the window: and when it was open, the fair and bright day appeared, and he beheld the woman right fair and goodly, and perceived that it was the wife of the steward, and said to him, Oh, thou stain to man-hood, and shame to thy creation: why hast thou for so little money, shamed and undone thy fair and good wife, and hast delivered her unto me unwitting? Therefore haste thee, and get thee gone out of my Realm, and never more hereafter come in my sight: for from henceforth if ever I may see thee, thou shalt die the most shameful and horrible death that can be imagined. When the steward heard that, he fled his way, and durst not abide, and was never so hardy any more to come into the Realm. And the King kept that wife all his life-time in great honor, and gave to her plenty of all things that to her behoved and appertained.

After that, the King caused to be gathered and assembled a great and mighty Army of puissant men of war, and so he went to the City of Rome with great might, and besieged the City on all sides, so long, until the Romans would have delivered to him (for to have departed and withdrawn himself from thence) the bodies of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul.

Then there was in the City seven Wise Masters as ye have now, by the counsel of whom all the City was guided & governed. And the Citizens came to them and said, What shall we now do? it behoveth us that we give unto our deadly enemies the bodies of the holy Apostles, or else the City. Then answered the first Master, I shall with my wisdom and cunning this day save this City, and the bodies of the Apostles. And so every one of them for one day promised to do the like, in like manner as your Masters have promised your Son. With that the King began to assault the City on all parts. Then began the first Master to say, and to alledge so wisely for to have peace, that the King that day left his assault, and withdrew himself a little from the City, and so did all the Masters do one after another, till the last. Unto whom came the Burgesies of the City, and said; O Masters, ye shall understand, that the King hath made his oath and sworn, that to morrow with all his puissance & strength, he will have and win the City, or else we must be all in jeopardy to lose our lives: therefore in acquitting your promise, defend and keep us from danger, like as your fellows before you had done. Then answered the Master, and said, Be of good comfort and fear not: for to morrow I shall by my cunning, shew such a work and operation, that the King, and all his puissance and might shall fly away and leave

leave the siege. The next day the King made and gave a great assault unto the City: then went the *Master* & clothed himself in a marvellous strange vesture, having therein the feathers or tails of peacocks and of other fowls of diverse colors, and took two bright swords, in each hand one, and went therewith, and stood upon the highest tower of all the City, and began to move and turn, and threw himself about on all parts towards the host, so that they might all behold and see him: and he held in his mouth the two bright swords that marvellously shined: they without the King's host beholding that, said unto him, O King, behold upon the highest of yonder towers a wonderful thing. Yea quoth he, I see it right well: it is marvellous, but what it is, I know not. They say, It is the God of Christian folk, that is come out of heaven to slay and destroy us with his two swords, if we any longer abide. The King hearing that, trembled for fear, and said, What shall I do? there is but one way, and that is, that we anon go and depart from hence, lest that their God avenge himself on us. Then began the King, with all his host, to fly: Notwithstanding there was no need, but that they of the *Master* were beguiled & deceived: And when the *Romans* saw that they hastily pursued after, armed in good ordinance, and the King, with many of his people, they killed and destroyed, and in that manner by great subtilty of the *Masters*, was the mighty King with his army subdued. Then said the *Empress* to the *Emperor*, Lord, ye have understood what I have said. He said, Yea, very well with good attention. She said, Now ye have heard what I have said unto you, at the beginning of this narration of the steward, that the King trusted so much, which for covetousness of gold shamed his own wife, and he for that was driven and banished out of the Land. In like manner, your Son, for the desire and appetite that he had to the *Empire*, intendeth to confound and destroy you, but whiles you be in your might and power, do ye him as the King did with the steward: if you will not put him to death, then put him out of your empire, & you may without fear live in safeguard of your life. And have you not also heard how the King lay before the City of *Rome*: and how he was by the wise *Masters* deceived and scorned, and that he with his followers were killed and slain: In the same manner the seven wise *Masters* intend to deal with you, and with crafty wiles and subtilties, to deceive you, and in the end, traiterously to Murder you, that so your Son might reign and be whole Governour of your empire. Whereupon answered the *Emperor*, and said, That shal not be so, for to morrow my Son shall die. Then he commanded his servants that forthwith they should lead his Son to execution. When the people had heard these rydings, they gathered themselves together in great troupes, much lamenting and bewailing for the death of the *Emperor's* Son. And so soon as the sixth *Master* had heard thereof, he hasted him to the *Emperor's* Court, and saluted him

with

with great reverence: but he took all things very disdainfully, & threatened him that he should be put to death with his Son, for that he was with them made dumb, and a ribauld, which was shewed towards his wife. The *Master* said, I have not deserved to die with your son, but to have great and large gifts: for he is not dumb, as you shall hear within three dayes, and if he may live so long, but if you put him to death for 5 words of your wife, then shall I marvel at your wisdom; and without doubt it shall happen to you, as sometimes it happened to a Knight that so much allowed the saying of his wife, that he was bound to an horse tail, and drawn throughout all the City to the gallows. The *Emperor* said, for the love of God shew me that example, that I may the better beware of that peril. That I will not do, said the *Master*, without you do call again your Son. Then he commanded to call back his Son. and the *Master* began as followeth.

The example of the sixth Master.

Sometime there was an *Emperor* of *Rome* which had three Knights whom he loved above all others. In the same City there was an ancient knight that wedded a fair young wife, which above all other things he loved, as you do the *Empress*: The Lady could sing right well and melodiously, and with such sweetness that many drew to her house, and desired her company. It befel on a season as she sat in her house her visage turned into the street, that she might see them that walk by, and began sweetly to sing, that all folk delighted to hear her. By chance came that way a knight of the *Emperors* Court, that heard her voice, and beholding her with a willing mind, and attentive ear, he was exceedingly taken in her love: and then entering into her house, fell into communication and talk with her greatly, but chiefly of love: & amongst all other talk he demanded of her what he should give unto her to sleep by her side one night: She answered him, One hundred Florents. Then said the Knight, Tell me when I shall come and I shall give you an hundred Florents. Sir Knight, quoth she, when I have convenient time I shall send for you. The next day she sung again in the same place, and it fortuned the second Knight of the *Emperors* Court to come by that same way, the which likewise was smitten in her love: & he also promised her an hundred Florents: To whom also she promised to shew him a time provided. The third day also there came to her a Knight, and he in like manner was taken in her love: To him likewise she consented, and he promised her an hundred Florents, if that she would give him knowledge of the time, which she also promised. These three Knights having so secretly spoken with the Lady, that none of them had any knowledge of anothers coming unto her. Now the Lady that was thus malicious and deceitful, came to her husband, and

said, Sir, I have a secret matter to shew unto you, wherein if you will follow my counsel, our necessity and poverty you may largely relieve. Then the Knight replied, Tell it me, and I will keep it as secret as my life, and fulfill it to the uttermost of my power. She answered and said, Three Knights of the Emperors Court have been with me of late, and another, in such wise, that not one of them knoweth of anothers counsel, and each Knight hath offered me an hundred Florents. Might we three hundred Florents get, and no man have knowledge thereof, should it not be to us great help, and our poverty be well relieved? Then said the Knight, Forsooth yes, and therefore whatsoever you shall counsel me to do, I shall most willingly perform: then said she, Thus do I give you counsel, that when those Knights shall come with their Florents, you shall stand behind the gate, with your sword drawn in your hand, and as they come (being that they come one after another) you shall slay them, and so we shall have those three hundred Florents that they bring, without any mans knowledge thereof. The Knight answered, O my best beloved wife, I fear that this evil cannot be hid, and then we should therefore suffer death, if that it were known. She answered and said, I shall this work begin, and I shall thereof make a good end, and fear it not. When the Knight saw that she was so hardy, it caused him to be the more bold: then she sent for the first Knight, and he came to her anon without any tarrying to the gate, and knocked, and she asked if he had brought the hundred Florents. He answered and said, Yea, I have brought them with me. Then she led him in, and he had no sooner entred, but her husband murdered him. Immediately after came the Second Knight, and in like manner was slain. And not long after that came the third Knight, whom he also slew: and having finished the butchery, they conveyed their murdered bodies into a secret chamber fit for that purpose. When they had thus done, the Knight said unto the Lady, O dear wife, if that these dead bodies should be found with us, we shall die the most shameful death that can be imagined: for it is not possible but that these three Knights will be missed in the Emperors Court, and great search and inquisition will be made for them throughout all this City, where they are become. She answered, and said, Sir, I have now this work begun, and will therefore make a good end, fear it not as I have said before. This Lady had a brother, the which had the whole government of the wealth of the City, that on the nights watched in the streets with his fellows: she stood at her gate, and called unto her brother, and said unto him, O my best beloved brother, I have a secret matter the which I would make known unto you, and therefore come in with me, and I will relate it unto you. And when that he was entred into the house, the Lady received him friendly, and gave him wine to drink, and said, My beloved brother, This is the cause that I have called you,

for I have much need of your counsel. The brother answered, and said, Speak it boldly unto me, and whatsoever I may do, to my power, that shall be at your desire without letting. Then said she unto him. Yesterday came a Knight in good friendship, but afterwards he fell into such words and variance with my Husband, that he slew him, and he lyeth here in my chamber: Now my dear brother, we have no man that we may put trust in but only you, and if this dead body be found in our house, we shall be put to death. Now she made mention but of one. Her brother said unto her, Deliver him unto me in a sack, and I shall bear him to the sea. She hearing that, was full glad thereof, and delivered unto him the body of the first Knight: he took it and went with all a good space, & cast him therein. And as soon as this was done, he came again unto his sister, and said unto her. Give me now of the best wine for you are of him quit. And she gave him thanks, and went unto her chamber, as though she had gone for wine, and began to cry out with a loud voice, The Knight that was cast into the sea, is come again. As her brother heard that, he wondred sore, and said, Give me him, I shall see if he will rise again, and took the body of the second Knight, (supposing that it had been the body of the first Knight) and went to the sea, and with a great stone he drowned him therein. That done, he went again to his sisters house, and said, Now fill me up a cup of good wine: for I have drowned him so deep, that he shall never come again. Then said she, thanks be to God, and went again to her chamber, and feigned her to fetch Wine, and cried with a loud voice, Alace, wo be to me, he is risen again, and come out of the sea. And as her brother heard that, with a great marvel said, What devil is this Knight that I have cast into the water, and yet notwithstanding he is come again? Deliver him me the third time, and I shall see if he will come again. Then she gave to him the third Knight which he did before believe had been the first, and went without the City to a great Forrest, and made a great fire to cast the Knight therein: and when he was almost burnt, the brother went thence a little distance to do his need. Then came there a Knight that was to ride to the City, where in the morning they should have a Tourney and Jousting: and it was cold weather and dark, and he was not far from the City: and when he had sight of the fire, he drew thereto, and lighted from his horse and warmed him. The watchman came and said to him, What art thou? The Knight said, I am a gentle Knight. Then spake the watchman and said, Thou art no Knight, but a devil, for I first cast thee into the water, the second time with a great stone I drowned thee, and the third time I have put thee in this fire, supposing thou hadst been burnt, and yet thou standest here: and then he took the Knight with his horse and cast them both into fire. After that he went again unto his sister, and told what had happened to him, and said, Now bring me of the best wine, for
after

after that I had burnt him, I found him again by the fire with a horse, and I have cast them both into the fire: and by this his sister perceived well that he had burnt a Knight of the Tourney: who anon brought him of the wine abundantly, and after he had well drunken, he went thence. Not long time after there fell a great debate and contention betwixt the Knight and his wife, in such wise, that he smote her, so that she had indignation thereof, and waxed angry, and said, that many might hear, O wretch, wilt thou kill me as thou hast done the three Knights of the *Emperors*? Certain men hearing that, laid hands on them, and brought them before the *Emperor*, and the woman confessed that her husband had slain three Knights of the *Emperors*, and how he took from them three hundred Florents. And it was thus in truth found, both were drawn at a Horse-tail, and hanged upon the gallows. Then said the *Master* unto the *Emperor*, have you understood what I have said? He answered, Right well. I say for certain, that wife was the worst Woman that might be of all women, for first she moved & stirred him up to murder, & afterwards discovered him. The *Master* answered, and said, Without doubt it shall happen unto you worse, if you put your son to death by the advice of your wife. The *Emperor* said, My Son shall not die this day. The *Master* hearing that, gave thanks to the *Emperor*, and took leave and went his way.

The seventh Complaint of the Emperess.

When the *Emperess* heard that the Son of the *Emperor* was yet living, as a mad woman she ran to the *Emperor*, weeping and crying, saying, Oh unhappy woman. Alace, what shall I do? I must needs slay myself that am so ashamed, and no punishment thereupon done. The *Emperor* answered, God defend y^e you should have mind on such wicked deed, but suffer a while, and you shall have a good end of your cause. She answered, Sir, the end shall be evil: for of y^e shall follow to you and me a great confusion. The *Emperor* said Leave off such talk. She said, Lord, it shall come to you & your Son, as it happened unto a King & to his steward. I pray you tell me that example. She said, I will gladly tell it, but I fear that you will hear me no more: for the next day the seventh *Master* shall speak, and save your Son from the death, as the other six of his fellows have done, and the next day after that, your Son shall speak: of those words you shall have and take such joy and delectation, that the love betwixt us shall be wholly forgotten and washed away. The *Emperor* said, That is impossible to be, for I shall never forget your love.

Then said she, O my best beloved Lord, if it please you, I will tell you one example, by the which you shall beware of many perils to come, and especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his *Masters*. The *Emperor* said, Tell us your example. And the *Emperess* began to tell of this, as hereafter followeth.

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The seventh Example of the Egyptians.

THere was sometimes a King which loved his wife above all things, insomuch that he closed her in a strong Castle, and he bare the keyes of the Castle himself: the Lady was therefore right heavy and comfortless. Now in far Countreisthere was a valiant Knight, the which on a time lying on his bed dreamed after this manner, He thought verily that he saw one of the fairest queens & ever mans eye might behold, whose love above all other women he desired to obtain, and if that he might see her walking, he should certainly have some knowledg of her, by whom towards him great friendship and honor should come. To the queen the same night by vision of the said Knight, the like was also straightly shewed, and as yet they have not any knowledge of each other, neither of name nor yet of fame. When the Knight had thus dreamed, and seen (as he thought) a most vertuous and comely Lady in his sleep, he then determined in his mind, that his foot should take no rest, until the time that he had found out the Lady that to him in his dream seemed so glorious: And having taken his horse and with him all that was necessary for his journey, he then travelled throughout diverse Regions, Countreies and Kingdoms, so long, until at last he came unto the same Land where this aforesaid queen was by her jealous husband inclosed, and kept in a strong Castle. And when this said Knight was come into the said City, and having for a certain season therein sojourned, it so fell out, that upon a day as the Knight walked by the Castle (and knew not as then that & queen was therein kept) she was at a time sitting in a window, to behold and see the People passing by, and amongst all others, she espied the Knight & before we spake of, and knew him to be the same man, of whom she had dreamed before, and the Knight by chance lifted up his eyes, & perceived the Lady sitting in & window, & anon his mind gave him that it was she of whom he had dreamed, & she began to sing a song of love. And as he heard & he was then taken with her love. The Knight from henceforth daily went and walked about the Castle, beholding it all over, to espy & if any manner of way he might get in, to declare & secrete of his mind unto her. Then & Lady perceiving that, she presently indited a letter, & secretly conveyed it unto him from & casement of her Chamber window. And when he had perused over her letter, and understanding the will of & Lady, he without any delay began to haunt Justs and Turnaments, and he did perform so many greeat and marvelous acts & the same of him came to the ears of the King. And as soon as the King heard thereof, he sent after him, & said unto him, Sir Knight, I have heard that you have got much honor at our Justs & Turnaments, wherefore if it will please you to abide here, and dwell with us, we shall give you large gifts, and rewards. The Knight answered and said, O right mighty Prince, I am your servant; would to God & I could

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could do any service & might be pleasing to your magnificence without taking of any reward, save one thing before all other I desire. The King said unto him, Shew it unto me boldly what thing that is. The Knight answered, My Lord, seeing that it hath pleased your most excellent Majesty to take me for your servant, and one of your most grave Council, it now seemeth unto me to be most expedient for both our delights, that I had a place nigh unto the wall of the Castle that I at all times might be the more ready at your calling, when you have need. The King answered and said, I consent unto you, make it as you shall think best. Then y King caused many work-men to be brought before him: having so done, he choosed out certain men fit for his purpose, & caused them to build a fair lodging near unto the walls of the tower, & all this being finished, he made a covenant with one of the work-men (whom he thought fittest for y purpose) to make out of his house a secret way to y queens lodging: And when this was finished according to his desire, he then killed the work-man, because he should not make it known unto any. And having thus done, he went in unto the queen, and did her reverence, for it did become him so to do: and they discoursed of many matters; and having thus passed away y day, & the night drawing on, he then desired that he might sleep by her on night, but she often times did deny him, & yet nevertheless she consented unto his request. And now they having spent y night in their pleasures, & the morning being come, this Knight then returned to his own lodging. And y queen began to think with her self, and said, What shall I do? If I should make the King my husband acquainted herewith, there would two evils come thereof: the one is my shame, and y peradventure he should utterly forsake me & cause me to be driven out of this land for ever: y other is, that he would slay y Knight, for from death it was not possible for him so escape, & therefore I think it to be more expedient for me to be secret herein, than for to reveal it unto any. After that the Knight as often as it pleased him, went in into the queen, and did his will with her, and she gave him a ring, y which the King had given her at her wedding. The Knight was so famous, & had such excellent knowledge in Justing that in every battel & turnament, he had the victory, for which cause he was held in great estimation and favour with the King, so y he made him his steward & governor over all his Region and Land. It happened upon a day y the King was disposed to ride on hunting, wherefore he commanded his steward to make him ready on y morrow for to go w him: whereunto he offered himself most willingly. And upon y morrow after they entred into the Forrest, & all y day they chased & followed the wild beasts, that they were so weary grown, y the King did sit down by a fountain to rest him, and the Knight by his side, & the Knight was no sooner set, but he fell asleep by y King, having the ring upon his finger w the queen had given him: which the King perceiving and marking, did know it right well: Now when

A Knight waked & perceiving y^e the King had seen y^e Ring, then he feigned himself to be sore sick, and said unto him, my honored Lord, I feel my self sore sick, y^e if I do not w^{ith} all speed I may, haste me unto my lodging, & there seek out some present remedy, either by means of physick, or by some other course, or else I am but a dead man: and therefore I pray you to give me leave to go home. Unto whom y^e King made this answer & said, Go my dear friend, in the Name of God, & see y^e there be nothing wanting that may procure thy health, that either my Court or Kingdom can afford. The King had no sooner ended his speech, but immediately y^e Knight took his leave of him & getting upon his horse, he than hastened unto his house, & as soon as he was come home, he presently alighted, & hastened him to y^e Queens lodging, & gave her the Ring again: & he told her withal, how that the King had espied it upon his finger, when they were both weary & sat down to rest: & w^{hen} he told her, that he had feigned himself to be sore sick, for which cause the King gave him leave for to return back to his lodging: he also prayed her, that if the King at any time should call for the Ring, that immediately she should shew it unto him. This done, he took his leave of the Queen, & went down again to his lodging. And not long after that, the King came unto y^e Queen, and the Queen received him right lovingly, and after y^e a little time was passed, the King said unto her, My renowned Lady, show me where the Ring is that I gave to you, for I have a great desire to see it. She answered & said, O my best beloved Lord, to what instant at this time do you desire to see it? Then said he, If you shew it not to me incontinently, it shall repent you. Then she arose up and went to her Chest, and took the Ring out of it: and having thus done, she brought it to the King her husband: and when he had seen it, he then was half ashamed, & said unto her, My best beloved Queen, O how like is y^e Knights Ring unto this your Ring, which I saw upon his finger: for I believed y^e it had been mine, and therefore that was y^e cause why I did ask so hastily of you for it. And now of this evil suspicion I yield my self guilty against you, my dear Lady, in this behalf, for y^e strength of y^e tower deceived me: for I thought none could get therein but I my self alone, in regard that no man hath the keeping of the Keys but my self only. She said unto him, My dear Lord, wonder not, for one ring may be like another, and work-men do seldom make one piece of work, but there are others y^e make y^e same: but God forgive you in that you have so suspected me, for you know the strength of y^e Tower, & y^e Keys you have always in your presence & will trust no man therewith. After y^e the Knight ordained a great Dinner, and said unto y^e King, My Sovereign, it is so that my Lady & love is come hither from out of my country, to seek me, for whose sake I have ordained a dinner to be made, therefore I would intreat your highness y^e you would do me that honor, as to dine w^{ith} me

at my house this day, and to take such meat, as shall be there provided. The King answered, and said, Most willingly will I do unto you y^e worship & more. The Knight was glad thereof, & then by his secret way he went unto y^e Queen, & said unto her, my beloved Lady, you must do this, you shall come to my house y^e privy way, & you shall clothe your self in rich clothing, & deck your self wth Jewels, & other Ornaments according to y^e manner & custom of my Countrey, & then shall you sit at y^e Table with my King, as my Sovereign Lady, & make him good chear. She replied unto him after this manner: Sir Knight, I shall be ready to do all things according to your desire. And when y^e time appointed was near at hand & that y^e King was coming from the Castle towards the Knights house, in y^e mean time, by y^e secret way, the Queen did enter into y^e Knights lodging (before y^e the King could come thither) and apparelled her self after y^e manner of y^e Knights Countrey. And when the King was entered into the house, she meeting him wth courtly salutations, received him. And when the King had beheld her, he demanded of the Knight, What Woman she should be, y^e seemed unto him so fair? Then answered y^e Knight & said, My renowned Lord, it is my Sovereign Lady, that now even for y^e love that she beareth to me, is come out of my Countrey after me, to know wherefore I should absent my self so long, both from her love & service. Now their speech being ended, y^e Knight caused y^e King to sit down at the Table, and made the Queen to sit by him, and the King thought that it was his Queen, & said wthin himself, O how like is this Woman unto my Wife? So y^e strength of y^e Tower still deceived him, & he gave more faith & credence unto the Knights words, than he did his own eyes. The Queen began to speak, and talk to the King, and to stir him to eat & drink, and make good chear. And as the King heard y^e voice, then he said unto himself, O blessed Lord, how like is this woman to my queen in her behavior, speech, visage, & in all other things & conditions. And still y^e strength of the Tower deceived him. In y^e end of y^e feast, y^e Knight prayed his beloved Lady to sing a song before the King, & she began to sing a song of love. When y^e King had heard her, he knew her voice, and thought unto himself, Is not this my Wife? And yet how can this be she, I having the Keys of y^e Tower in keeping? And so all the time of Dinner the King sat striving & debating, thus wthin himself. But Dinner being ended, he willed y^e Knight, that forthwith he would take up y^e Table, he having some urgent occasions that moved him thereto; for he was in great thought, & sore troubled in his mind. Whereupon the Knight answered, and said, My Lord, what is y^e reason you are so melancholy & sad? What is it y^e discontenteth you? Be not much troubled in your mind; & if it you please, we shall make you some pleasant sport & solace. And y^e Gentle woman said, My beloved Lord, if it shall please you wth us to abide, we shall make you all y^e pleasure & delight

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delight & this place can afford, in such sort, that if your Queen herself were here, she could not give you more content. Whereupon the King began to be very angry, & said unto him, Take away the Table, for I may no longer here abide, untill that I have resolved my mind. Then the Knight obeyed & commandment of the King, & instantly took up & Table, giving thanks unto them all, but especially unto the King his most Sovereign Lord and Master. Now the King he departed from the Knights house, and went with all haste & might he unto & Castle, intending to see whether & his Queen were therein or not. But in & mean time the Queen went in at her Private-door: and as soon as she came therein, she stripped off her uppermost vesture, & then put her self in & same habit which the King did leave her in. The King entering, he found the Queen in the same clothing that he hath left her in before, & seeing all things fall out contrary to his expectation, he then did embrace & most lovingly kissed her, & said unto her, This day have I eaten with my Knight, & with his beloved Lady, who hath come out of her countrey, unto this my Court to find him out, who being together met & overmuch joyed in & sight of her, did presently ordain a great feast to be provided, & humbly did intreat me to do him so much grace, as & I would accompany him at his feast. Whereunto I answered, that for & love I did bear him, I would do him that honor & much more, & he would request me: whom I have beheld, & she seeming unto me so fair, & since I was born, unto this day, mine eyes have not seen in all & World, one so like as she is to you, inasmuch & all & Dinner time I was so much troubled with many matters, that I could hardly endure unto & end of & feast, but that incontinently I must come home to see whether you were here or there. Then the Queen answered, and said unto him, O mighty King, wherefore do you so much mistrust me, having so often times found & contrary? Do you not know (yea right well) & this Tower is so fast, strong & invincible, as that no man can enter in, nor out, without your knowledge? For you have always & keeping of & Keys, & will not trust any man therewith: how were it then possible & I should be there? Sometimes you shall find one man to be like another: you remember of late how you did mistake & Knights Ring, imagined it to be & Ring & you gave me, & have you yet more arguments of suspicion against me? was it not sufficient for you to delar me of my liberty for these many years, but & ye must needs be jealous of me besides? I tell thee, O Noble King, & if you do not forsake this jealousy, & also release me out of this place of imprisonment, & before some days be expired, I will end my days herein: for I had rather live as a servant at liberty, than now for to be a Queen, & to live herein as a prisoner. Then the King answered, & said unto her, All this & you have related is true, for & cause I acknowledge my self to be guilty of all these accusations, wherefore have patience but for some few

days, and as sure as I reign King of this Countrey and Castle, I will set you at libertie, & so he lovinglie embraced her wth a kisse, and then returned to his own lodging. Now he had not rested in his lodging above two days, before *Ƴ* Knight came into *Ƴ* Court, and said unto the King, O my honorable Lord, I have of long time served your Highness, & now it is time that I return again unto mine own Countrey, and for all the service that I have done unto your honor, I desire that you would do but this one thing for me, that is, *Ƴ* you my Noble Lord would do me but this one favor before my departure hence, which is, to give to me before the Priest with your own hand, in the face of the Church, my beloved Lady whom I intend to Wed, who hath followed me out of far Countries for the love of me, and whom I shall bring thither again, as my lawful and true Wife, the which thing will be unto me great worship and honor, when I shall come unto my own Countrey. The King answered, and said unto him, That petition, and much more then that, (if you will desire it of me) will I gladly do and fulfill. Then *Ƴ* Knight prefixed the day of their marriage, at which day the good King came to the Church, being honorably attended. The Priest he was ready, and stood adorned wth his vestiments, for to solemnize *Ƴ* matrimony. The Knight having apparelled the Queen in his own house, after the manner of his own Countrey, & had ordained two Knights for to lead her unto the Church, & they believed that it had been his paramour. And when they were come unto *Ƴ* face of the Church, *Ƴ* Priest said, Who shall give this Woman to this Knight? Then the King said, I shall give her unto my own Knight, and took the Lady by the hand, and said unto her, O good Woman, you are much like unto my Queen, and therefore my love is to you the greater, and also because you shall be Wedded unto this Knight, whom I affect above all other men, and he shall be of my house, & so he put *Ƴ* Queens hand into *Ƴ* Knights hand: And then the Priest after the order of the ceremonies of the Church, bound them, and Wedded them together in the true and faithful Wedlock.

And when all these Rites were finished & done, *Ƴ* Knight spake unto *Ƴ* King, & said, O Noble King, the ship *Ƴ* I intend to go in towards my Countrey, is now furnished very fitting for my journey, & now is readie for to sail away, wherefore I humbly beseech your most noble Grace, *Ƴ* it will please you to accompanie my beloved Wife thereunto, & *Ƴ* you will advertise & admonish her to love me, & *Ƴ* she should have me in favor above all other creatures living, & so much *Ƴ* rather, for your good exhortation & counsel thereunto. Then *Ƴ* King with a great companie of his followers besides others, went with them, and did accompanie them unto *Ƴ* ship, for whose departure to *Ƴ* ship, manie of them were exceeding sorrowfull & heavie. Then *Ƴ* King began to say unto the Queen, My most dear friend, hearken now well unto my counsel, and see that you follow it, for it shall be to your profit,

The seven Wise Masters.

profit, My much honored & beloved Knight hath now Wedded
and done to you all the worship and honor y^e in him is, where-
fore look that ye love, honor, and obey him above all earthly
creatures, as God hath commanded, and that you be unto him
true & constant in all your dealings. And so soon as this speech
was ended, he delivered her unto the Knight, saying, My blef-
sing go with you both, and our Lord keep and conduct you in
safety unto your own Countrey. Then y^e Knight & the Queen
bowed and inclined their heads down to the King, and gave
him thanks for all these courtesies and kindneses that he had
done for them: and having so done, they committed him to the
Almighty, & entred into the ship, and the Mariners hoysed up
their sails, and sailed forth before the Wind, so y^e win a shore
space the King had lost y^e sight of the ship: And from thence he
went hastily into the Castle, & being thither come, he presently
went to seek for his Queen, and when he could not find her, he
was then moved in all the parts of his body, and sought all about
the Tower: he searched so long, untill at last he found out the
hole of the secret way that the Knight had caused to be made,
and as he saw that, he wept bitterly, crying out, & said Alace,
alace, this Knight in whom I had so great confidence and trust,
hath robbed me, and taken away my Wife, was not I a fool that
I gave more faith to the words of a Knight then I did to mine
own eyes? then spake the *Empress*, and said, My Lord have
you understood what I have said? The *Emperor* said, well, in
the best wise that may be. Then answered the *Empress*, and
said unto him, Remember how that he trusted the Knight, and
yet y^e Knight deceived him: in y^e like manner you will put your
trust and confidence in the seven *Wise Masters*, and they labor
for to destroy me y^e am your Wife, and you give more credit to
their words then you do unto your own eyes; for you have well
seen how your ungracious Son hath rent & scratched me, whereof
yet I bear and have his tokens and marks about me, as you may
plainly see: and also you know right well, how that your ac-
curst Son hath ashamed me, and you mark not how they defend
him in this their folly & extreme falshood: therefore it is to be
feared, that it will happen unto you, worse then it did to the
King of whom I have spoken unto you already. The *Emperor*
replied, I will believe mine own eyes before that I will give any
credence to their words, and therefore I say unto you, to morrow
I shall do you justice upon my Son. The next day the *Emperor*
commanded that his Son should be brought before him, which
thing being done according to his desire, he then commanded y^e
his Son should be led unto the place of execution, & thereto suffer
death according to the law. Then there began to arise a great
noise, and much bewailing amongst the common people, for the
death of the *Emperor's* only Son. At the last, when the seventh
Master heard and perceived that, he ran immediately to the

Officers & were leading him to the gallows, & said unto them, my dearly beloved friends, I pray you not to make overmuch hast, but stay your hands yet a while, for I thinke this day (with *ſ* gracious help & assistance of Almighty God) to save & deliver him from all perils and dangers: and from hence the *Masters* halted him towards the *Emperors* Palace: and there hadid him reverence according to his accustomed duty. But *ſ* *Emperor* with great wrath & indignation againſt him, made him this answer: Never more have you any joy nor comfort in this world, for *ſ* you have ſent my Son home both untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well ſpeaking, for *ve* cause you ſhall all be put to death wth him. The *Maſter* answered, and ſaid unto him, O moſt noble *Emperor*, the time is not long betwixt this and to morrow noon: then (by the grace of God) you ſhall hear him ſpeak, & *ſ* both wiſely & diſcreetly, & unto you he ſhall declare the truth of all things, & *ſ* I will promiſe you he will perform to the full, upon pain of my life, if you will ſpare him ſo long time: if you find it not ſo, then take my life, & the lives of us all. Then ſaid the *Emperor*, If I might but hear my Son ſpeak, it would give me ſufficient contentment, and I would not deſire longer for to live. Then answered the *Maſter*, & ſaid unto him again, All this & more, you ſhall both hear & ſee, and confeſs it to be true, if you will but abide this little time, & then ſhall this diſſention be only known, and the ſtriſe that hath been betwixt us and the *Empreſs*, will clearly be decided. And if that you do not call again that Noble Prince, your Son, but ſuffer him to be put to death through the words of your moſt ungodly & wicked Wiſe, I tell you of a truth, that it ſhall happen worſe to you, then it did to a Knight that dyed for a little blood that he ſaw his Wiſe to bleed, to whom afterwards ſhe was moſt unnatural. Then ſaid *ſ* *Emperor*, That Example would I faine hear. Then ſaid the *Maſter*, Let your Son be called again, and I ſhall tell you ſo notable an Example, that during your life you may beware of the untruth and unſtedfaſtneſs of Women. Then the *Emperor* ſaid, I ſhall, go call my Son back again. Upon condition that to morrow I ſhall hear my Son ſpeak, as you have promiſed me. The *Maſter* ſaid, Do that my Lord, for it ſhall be, and began to tell as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the ſeventh Maſter.

There was a Knight that had a fair young Wiſe, whom he loved intirely, inſomuch *ſ* he could not be out of her ſight: It happened on a time, *ſ* they played together at cheſs, & *ſ* Knight by chance had a knife in his hand, & the playing ſortuned to ſmite her hand on the knife, that a little blood began to appear. When *ſ* Knight ſaw *ſ* his Wiſe bled, he ſorrowed much, & was ſo ſore afraid of his Wiſe, that he fell to *ſ* ground in a ſound: his Wiſe ſeeing that, caſt cold water upon his face, inſomuch *ſ* he came a little again to himſelf, and ſaid lightly, Call the *Quas* with the holy

holy Sacrament, for I must die, for \S blood \S I have seen come out of your finger hath smitten death to my heart. Then \S Priest came and comforted him, and administred the Sacrament unto him, & anon after \S he died without any tarrying: for whose death, there was made great sorrow & bewailings, & especially by his Wife, and after that \S obsequies were finished, and done accordingly, she went and lay upon the grave, and there made great sorrow & Lamentation, and said, she would never depart from hence, but as a Turtle dove she would for the love of her husband there abide, and die: then went her friends and neighbours unto her, and said, What availeth this for his soul, to live here weeping untill you die: It is better that you go home to your house, and there give almes to the poor for the love of God, and that shall more avail your soul, than in this place to abide. To whom she answered, I pray you hold your peace, you are evil counsellors: consider ye not how I am from him parted and separated by death, for a little blood that he saw come out of my hand or finger, and therefore I shall never from hence depart?

Her friends hearing that, made her a little House or Lodging nigh unto the grave, and put therein all things that to her were necessary, went their wayes, thinking that within a while she would be weary to be alone, and so desolate from all company, that thereby she would desire again the company of the People.

In the City there was then a law, that if a trespasser or offender against the law were hanged, the sheriff all y^e night should watch and keep the dead body armed: and if it happened that y^e body of him hanged were stolen away, the Sheriff should lose all his lands, & his life at the Kings pleasure. It happened soon after that the Knight was dead, a man should be hanged for trespass that he had done, so that the Sheriff according to the law of the land, all that night watched by the gallows, that was not far from the City, and the Church-yard was not far from the same: then began the Sheriff to be so cold that he could not possibly endure it, but was even ready to die wth cold except y^e he might speedily warm him, it was so extream Cold, and so great a Frost: & by chance he beholding from thence about him, & spying a fire in y^e Church-yard, hasted him, & came thereto: & when he was come near unto it, he called & knocked at y^e little house: then y^e woman spake & said, Who is that, who at this hour knocketh at y^e house of this sorrowfull Woman? He answered, I am y^e sheriff y^e hath endured much cold, y^e I am ready to frize to death, unless wthour delay you let me in to warm my self: she said unto him, I fear that if I let you in, ye should shew me such words, y^e shall cause me to be more heavy. Then he said, I promise unto you, y^e I shall say no words to your displeasure. Then she let him in, & when he had sitten a while by y^e fire, & was well warmed, he said unto her O Fair-woman wth your licence would I speak but one word wth you. She answered him, Sir, say what it pleaseth you. Then he said, O

Lady;

Lady, you be a fair Gentle-woman, rich & young, were it not better & more convenient for you to dwell at home at your house, and to give alms, then to waste and consume your self here with weeping & crying? She said, Sir Knight, had I known this before, you had not come herein: for I say to you, as I have said to others oftentimes. You know well y my Husband loved me too well, y for a little blood y he saw me to bleed out of one of my fingers he is dead, wherefore I will here die for y love of him. And as y Knight heard this, he took his leave, & went again unto y gallows. And when he was come thither, & saw that y thief that he left there hanging was stollen & carried away, he began to wax heavy & fell for sorrow, & said, Wo is me, what shall I do? For I have lost my life & all my goods, and he going up & down this full of sorrow, & knew not what way to turn himself: at y last he bethought himself to go to y desolate Lady, & shew unto her the heaviness of his heart, to wit, if she could give him any good counsel. And when he was come thither, he called, & she asked him y cause of his knocking, Then he said, Madam, I am y sheriff that was right now with you, & I would fain shew unto you y secrets of my heart, therefore I pray you for y love of God, open the door, & he went in & said unto her, O most vertuous Lady, I am now come to have your counsel & advice, for you know well the laws of the land are, that whensoever any man is hanged & stollen from off the gallows, then the sheriffs life & goods be in the Kings hands. Now it happened in the time that I was here with you & warmed me, that y thief is stollen from the gallows, therefore I pray fair Lady, for the love of God, give me your best advice, what is best to do. She answered, I have compassion upon you, for by the law you have lost your life, and goods to y King, do now after my counsel & ye shall neither lose life nor goods. He answered, therefore I am to you greatly bound, hoping to have good comfort. She said, will you then promise to take me to your Wife? The Knight answered, Would God y you were indeed minded: but I fear least you should disdain so much to humble you to me, that am to poor a Knight. She said, I give you my will thereto, and he gave her again his will; and consented to be her Knight during all his life. Then said she, You know well y such a day my Lord was buried, which for y love of me died; take him out of the sepulchre, and go & hang him up in stead of the thief. The Knight answered her, Lady, your counsel is very good. Then went they together, & opened y sepulchre, & drew him out. The Knight said unto the Lady, how shall we now do, because ere y thief was taken & hanged, two of his upper teeth was smitten out of his head, and I greatly fear me, if that were perceived, I should die the death? Then the Lady said unto him, Take a Rune and strike out two of his teeth. And the Knight answered, Madam, that may I not do, for while he lived, he was my trusty and well beloved friend, and it should be to me a great rebuke, if

I should consent to do so disloyala deed unto his body, being dead. She answered, For your love shall I do it, and presently took a stone and smote out two of his teeth, and said to the Sheriff, Take him and hang him upon the Gallows like to the Thief. And the Knight said, I fear me to do it, for the thief in taking him, was wounded upon his head, and he lacked both his ears. O Madam, God forbid that I do so to the dead body that I loved so well in his life. Then said she, Give me your sword, and I shall for the love of you do it: and so took the sword and smote a manly stroke upon the dead mans fore-head, and cut off both his ears: and when she had thus done, she said, Now take and hang him, without company: And then the Knight answered, Yet I fear to hang him, for the thief wanted both his stones, and if y^e be were searched and found without, all our labor were in vain. Then said she, I never saw a man so fearful, seeing the matter so clear and sure: take a knife, and cut off his stones. And he answered, that may I not do in any wise, and therefore I pray you spare me, for ye know well what a man is without his stones. She said, For the love of you I shall do it, and took the knife in her hand, and cut off her husbands stones, &c said unto him, Now take the churle thus disfigured, and hang him up without dread: and they went both together, and hung the body upon the gallows, and so was the Sheriff delivered of the Kings anger. Then said the Lady, Now ye be quit of all your dangers, and delivered from all sorrows and dangers, by my counsel, therefore I desire you (according to your promise) that ye wed me in y^e face of the Church. The Knight said, I have made a vow that I will never wed another so long as you live which I shall perform. And then he said, O thou most shamefull and worst of all Women who would take thee to be his wife? an honorable and loving Knight was thy husband, who for a little blood that he saw issue out of thy finger, dyed. Now haste thou smitten out two of his teeth, thou hast cut off his ears, and his stones, and thou hast made him a great wound in his head: What devil would marry thee? And therefore thou shalt never shame good men more, I will ride thee of thy life: and so he drew out his sword, and with one stroke he smote off her head. Then the *Master* said unto the *Emperor*, My Lord, have ye understood what I have said? And he answered, Right well. Amongst all women this was the worst, and the Knight rewarded her accordingly, so y^e she should no more do men shame. And the *Emperor* said moreover, O my good *Master*, might I but once hear my Son speak, I should have no care of my self. Then said the *Master*, to morrow you shall hear him speak before you, and he shall shew the truth of all the variances betwixt us and the *Empress*, as I hope: and so took his leave of the *Emperor*, and departed.

How

How **DIOCLESIAN** the Emperors Son complained on the Empress, and how he excused himself to her complaint.

AND after that all the Masters assembled together and took counsel how or in what manner they should bring *ſ* child out of prison, and lead him to the Palace: and so they went to the child whereas he lay in prison before midday, his will and counsel for to hear. To whom the child said, What you will that shall please me: but in no wise busie your selves how I shall answer, or what I shall say: for wth joy I shall answer all things *ſ* shall be demanded of me. When *ſ* seven wise Masters heard *ſ*, they were exceeding joyful & glad, & they clothed him in purple, & in cloth of gold, & two of *ſ* said Masters went before him, & one upon his right hand, another upon his left hand, & *ſ* other 3 followed after him: & before them all, went twelve men wth instruments of music, who brought him wth great honor & melody to *ſ* Palace. & when *ſ* Emperor heard all this melody, he demanded what it was? Then it was told him by the standers by, saying, Mighty Emperorr, it is your Son which cometh before you, and before all your Lords, to speak and excuse himself of all *ſ* is laid unto his charge. The Emperor said, That it is good tidings, If I might hear my Son speak. And when *ſ* child was come into the Palace, he rood to his Father, & said unto him, Hail my most dear & most royal Father.

And when the Emperor heard the voice of his Son *Dioclesian*, he was so glad that for joy he fell down to the earth: but his son hasted to take up his father *ſ* Emperor again: & when he was come to himself, then began his son to declare & open all *ſ* whole matter unto his Father: & then there came so great a multitude of people into *ſ* Palace to hear the child speak, and the joy & noise of them were so great *ſ* the child could not possibly be heard. The Emperor considering that, caused money to be thrown into *ſ* streets, *ſ* the people therewith should be busied & avoided out of *ſ* Palace, *ſ* thereby they might *ſ* better hear the child speak: but *ſ* folk took no regard at all after *ſ* money which was cast abroad. And when the Emperor perceived that, presently he commanded silence upon pain of their lives. And when they were all still, then the child began to speak as followeth. O most dear father before that I speak anything I intreat and beseech you, that the empress, wth all her chamber-maidens may come & be present: and so the emperor commanded the Empress with all her chamber-maidens to come without delay. The Empress hearing *ſ* (being in great fear) came with all her maidens, & the child commanded them to stand before all *ſ* people in a row, that he might see them. Then said the child, Sir, lift up your eyes and behold the chamber-maid that standeth there in *ſ* green clothing, whom you know *ſ* Empress loveth best above all others: command her to be unclothed unto her naked body, before us all, & see what she is. The Emperor said, my daughter, *ſ* would shame us all, to have a woman to stand naked before

forens. He said, if it be a woman, it is my shame, & if not, let the shame abide in her. When that she was unclothed, they all said, it was a man, and so appeared, whereat they greatly wondred.

*The Declaration of the Complaint of the Emperors**Son on the Empress.*

Then said the Son unto his Father, Behold this ribauld hath many a night lyen with your wife in your chamber in adultery, and hath defiled your bed, and him the empress loveth above all others, the which thing you did not know.

When that the Emperor had seen and beheld these things, he with a great indignation and wrath gave commandment y^e both the Empress and the ribauld should be burnt: but the Son answered and said, My Lord and Father, make no haste to give judgement, before I have reprov'd her of these grievous slanders that she did thus falsly accuse me of, and that I have declared how unjustly she hath complained of me, & sought by all means how she might take my life from me. Then said the Emperor, My dear son, I commit all the judgement into your hands. The son answered and said, If she be found false and a liar, then the law shall give sentence against her: but my loyal Father, when you sent after me, at her earnest sute and request, then I with my *Masters* beheld the stars in the firmament, by which I might perceive, y^e if I should have spoken any words unto you, or any other living creature, within the space of seven days, I should have died a most shameful death, and for that cause only I did forbear to speak until this present. And whereas the Empress most unjustly hath accused me, that I should have oppressed and ravished her, therein that I say she lieth falsly: for she most adulterously would have provoked me, for to defile the bed of my most gracious Lord and Father y^e Emperor, & when she in no wise could bring me thereto, then she took a pen, ink, and paper, & bade me write y^e cause wherefore I would not yield unto that which she so earnestly desired. And when I had written the cause wherefore I would not commit such a great & abominable sin, & how that I would not my fathers orchard defile, then began she to tear her clothes, & scratch her visage, that it gashed forth with blood, and cryed wth a loud voice, and said, This your son (having a mind full of lust) would have wronged your princely bed, and I resisting his lustful mind, most inhumanly hath he torn my flesh: when the Emperor heard this, he beheld her with a full countenance, and said unto her in this manner, O thou wretched woman, was it not sufficient to fulfil thy soul & lecherous appetit; thou & thy ribauld, but wouldst also have made my son? Then fell y^e Empress to y^e Emperors feet, and she cryed unto him for mercy. The Emperor said, O thou cursed and most unhappy woman, thou askest forgiveness, & thou art worthy none to have, for thou hast deserved to die in three manner of ways. The first is, y^e thou hast committed adultery.

The

The second is, that thou most lasciviously hath provoked and stirred up my son unto most wicked and abominable sin, and hast imputed and laid the crime falsely and unjustly upon him. And the third and last is, that thou hast every day inticed & provoked me with thy false tales to put my son to death: and therefore the law shall have his course against thee, and shall condemn thee unto death according as thou hast deserved.

Then answered his son, and said, most noble Father, you know well that for the leasings that she hath laid upon me, I was daily led unto hanging: but my Masters with the help of God, hath delivered me. O my most honorable Lord and Father, it was said unto you by the Empress, that I would also by the help of my *Masters*, depose you out of your empire, and that I did labor by all means possibly to destroy you, and to set my self in your kingdom: would you not then have much grieved and sorrowed? Have you not \S whole command & government of this your kingdom? wherefore then should I not use all \S knowledge & skill I have to help you, my most honored father, rather than any manner of way to destroy you? And now seeing that from you I have my living, I will repute you for my sovereign Lord & father, during \S term of my life, and I will not in any manner deprive you of your honor, but I will labor and busie my self about \S governing of \S same, & all your commandments I shall fulfil in every thing. But it is in \S same manner as \S Father \S cast his son into \S sea for to drown him, because he said \S he should live to see him a greater Lord than his Father was, & yet \S son by \S providence of God was saved and he became a greater Lord than his Father, and yet was no hindrance to him but rather profited him much: also you see and remember \S my life & carriage shall never hinder you, but it shall be to your joy & comfort. Then said the Emperor, Blessed be the Almighty God and the hour that ever I begat thee, and desired to have such a son that I find so wise & expert in all good things: tell me an example, by \S which we may perfectly understand thy wisdom, and that my heart may the better enjoy thee.

Then said the son, My honorable Father, command first silence to be made of your people, that I be not letted in my words till that I have done: And when that is ended. Give sentence with righteousness of the Law upon me and the *Empress*. Then commanded the *Emperor* silence, and the Child began to tell in ample manner, as hereafter followeth.

The Example of DIOCLESIAN the Emperors Son.

THere was a knight which had but one son that he loved right dear in \S beginning, as ye now all only have loved me: whom he delivered unto a *Master* \S dwelt in a far country to be brought up in learning & knowledge: This child as he waxed in years, so he encreased in wisdom and knowledge, and profited himself very much therein. And when he had been \S his *Master* seven years, his father desired to see him, & sent letters unto him \S he should come

come again into his Countrey, and visit his friends in like sort, as you have sent for me. The child was obedient to his father, & came at his commandment: for whose coming he did exceedingly joy, for that he was grown as well in comeliness of body, as also in doctrine and learning, & to every man he appeared pleasant and gentle.

It happened upon a day that the father and the mother sitting at the table, and the child served them, a nightingale came flying before the window, whereas they sate, & began to sing sweetly, that they marvelled: and the knight said, O how sweetly this bird singeth: well were he that could understand his song, and could shew & interpretation thereof. Then said & son, My worshipful Father, the song of this nightingale I could well declare, but I fear your displeasure. The Father said, say boldly my son the interpretation of the bird, and then ye shall prove whether I shall be angrie or no: but I shall mark well the reason of mine anger. And when the son heard that, he said the nightingale hath said in his song, that I shall become a great Lord, and I shall be worshipped and honoured of all men, and namely of my Father, the & shall bring me water to wash my hands, & my mother shall hold the towel. The Father said, Thou shalt never see the day such service of us to have, nor none such dignity shall follow thee: and in great madness and wofulness, he took his son upon his shoulder, and ran to the sea, and cast him in, and said, Ly there the interpreter of & birds song. The child could swim, and swam to a land, where he was four dayes without meat or drink: & fifth day there came a ship sayling: and as the child saw that, he called unto the ship-men, and said, For the love of God deliver me from & peril of death. The ship-men saw & it was a fair young man, and they had compassion on him, and went with the boat to fetch him aboard, and carried him into a far Countrey, and sold him there to a Duke. The child grew very proper and fair, and the Duke loved him much, and had him greatly in favor.

And upon a time the King of that Realm, did call a general assembly of all the great Lords, and noble-men, within the Realm together, for to sit in counsel. This Duke then prepared and ordained him to go to the said Counsel, and gave great regard unto the will and wisdom of the child, and therefore took the child with him: and when they were all gathered and assembled before the King and his counsel: my well beloved Lords, and friends, said the King, will you know & cause wherefore I have assembled you together? They answered and said, we all are, Sovereign Lord, at your commandment. Then said the King, It is a secret matter that I shall shew you, if & any man can open it and declare what it signifieth, I swear and promise unto him by my crown & I will give unto him mine only daughter in marriage, and he shall be my fellow in my Realm so long as life doth last: after my death, he shall have and possess all my whole Kingdom: and the mystery of the counsel is this.

Three Ravens follow me still wheresoever that I go, they leave me not, but cry out wth such horrible voices, that y^e pain is grievous, and wearisome for me to hear them, and much more to behold their looks: wherfore if there be any man, which knoweth y^e cause of this their earnest following of me, & can tell or shew what they mean by their crying, & avoid them away from me, wthout doubt I shall fulfill this promise y^e I have made. And as y^e King had thus said, there was none found in all the Counsel that understood y^e cause, or could remove or put away y^e Ravens. Then answered y^e Child, & said unto y^e Duke, my Lord, think you that the King will perform what he hath promised? and will you y^e I give the King knowledge of you, what you can do? Then the Child said, I will my life set in pledge, and I shall perform and make it good what I have said. When y^e Duke heard that, he went to the King, and said, My Lord and King, here is a young man right cunning & wise, & he doth promise to fulfill & satisfie in all things y^e you shall ask & desire touching these Ravens, if you will fulfill what you have promised. The King swore by y^e Crown of his Kingdom, that wth I have promised, all things shall be fulfilled. Then he brought y^e Child before the King, and when y^e King had beheld him, he spake unto him after this manner: O Fair-child, can you give answer to this my question? The Child answered, and said, Yea my Lord, & y^e in y^e best manner: your question is, wherfore that y^e Ravens follow you & horribly call upon you? to wth I answer: upon a time it happened, that there were two Ravens, a Male & a Femal, y^e had brought out between them a third Raven, & in that place there was such a great Famine & Scarcity of all manner of Food for y^e preservation of their lives, in such sort y^e Men, Beasts, & Fowls died & perished for want. Now y^e third Raven was at y^e time very young, & not able to fly abroad to get her living; the femal she left it, seeking whereby she might best get her own living: & to shew y^e she did nothing regard her young one, she came no more to y^e Nest, y^e Male raven seeing that, with great penury & labor fed the young Raven till he was able to fly: and now when this great dearth was past & gone, then y^e Femal raven returned home again to y^e young Raven, & would hold fellowship & company wth him, but y^e Male raven seeing that, he would have driven her away, saying, y^e she in his great misery & necessity left him & his company, and therefore now he would have no company nor fellowship wth her, she alleged and said, that she had in his Hatching great labor & sorrow, & suffered much penury, and for that cause she would rather enjoy his company then the Male raven. For this cause, my Sovereign Lord, they follow you asking true judgement which of them both shall have company wth the young Raven: and this is y^e cause of this horrible clamor and noise that they make daily unto you. But my honored Lord, had you thereupon a right wise sentence given, you shall never more see them, or be troubled wth their crying.

Then answered the King, and said, Because that the Femal harm
left & forsaken y^e young Raven in his most necessity, it standeth
with reason, and justice, that she should not follow him, but be
without his fellowship: and where she saith y^e in y^e Hatching,
& bringing forth of him she had great pain & travel that helpeth
not, for her pain was turned into joy, as soon as she saw the
young Raven in the World. But in regard that the Male is the
cause of production, and generation of every Beast of the Earth,
& of every Fowl of the Air, and also because the young Raven
in his necessity was sustained, and fed unto the recovering and
nowrishing of his body by the Male: therefore I conclude both
for judgement and sentence definitive, that the young Raven shall
abide & keep company with the Male, and not with the Femal.

And when the Ravens heard that sentence, with great noise
and cry they flew up into the Air, and were no more seen
nor found in all that Region.

When this was done, the King demanded of the young Man,
what his name was? He answered, and said, I am called *Alex-
ander*: then said the King, I will that you should grant me one
request, which is, that from henceforth you shall name, & take
me, & none other for your Father: for you shall have my Daugh-
ter to Wife, & you shall have y^e whole government & possession
of this my Realm. This young *Alexander* abode, & dwelled still
there with the King and every man did exceedingly love, and
favor him, for he began to Hunt Just and Tourneys, wherein at
all times he did win the prize before all others that were in *Egypt*,
so that his peer or like was not to be found: neither was there
so hard or obscure a question put to him, but that he could make
known the true sense and meaning thereof.

At that time there was an *Emperor* whose name was *Titus*, that
excelled in gentleness, courtesie, & curiosity, all other *Emperors*,
Kings & Princes in the whole World, insomuch that such Fame
and Noise flew and ran over the World of it, that whatsoever he
was that would learn & profit in cunning, manners or behavior,
he should go to y^e *Emperor's* Court. And when *Alexander* heard
thereof, he said to y^e King, My most honourable, Lord & Father,
you know well that the World is full of the Fame of the *Emperor*,
that it is very delectable & pleasant to abide & dwell in his court:
wherefore if it please you, my renowned Lord & Father, I would
very gladly go to his Court, to the intent that I may obtain more
wisdom, & grow prompter in manners & behavior then now I
am. Whereupon answered the King, it pleaseth me right well:
but I would that you take with you plenty of Gold & Silver, &
other necessities, so much that you mine honor there may save,
and that you may have also that which is to you most requisite,
and necessary. And also it seemeth unto me very expedient, that
before your departing, you should marry my Daughter.

Then answered *Alexander*, will it please you, my Lord, to spare

me at thistime, & at my coming home again, I shall wed her & all honor as unto her appeareth. The King answered, since that it is your will to go unto the *Emperors* Court, I licence it, and thereto I give my consent. Then *Alexander* did take his leave of the King, and took with him abundance of treasure, and then he went to the *Emperors* Court: and when he was come with many followers, he went before the *Emperor* and fell upon his knees, and saluted him, and did him reverence.

The *Emperor* rose up from his seat Imperial, and kissed him, and asked of him whence, and what he was? and wherefore he he was come? He answered and said, I am son and heir of the King of *Egypt*, and am come to do service to your most high Majesty, if it please you to accept of me. The *Emperor* said, that he was right heartily welcome, and committed him to his steward and made him his carver. The steward ordained him a fair Chamber, and provided for him all things that were necessary to the same: and *Alexander* behaved himself so well, that in short time he was beloved of all the people.

Not long after that, came the Kings son of *France* to do service unto the *Emperor*, and to learn good qualities, and fair and comely behaviour: him the *Emperor* received honorably, and he demanded his name, and of what kindred he was come? He answered, I am son to the King of *France*, and I have to name *Lodowick* your Servant: then said the *Emperor* I have made *Alexander* my carver, and you shall be my cup bearer that alwayes you shall do service at my table, and commanded the steward to assign him a lodging, whom he placed with *Alexander* in his chamber. These two gentlemen were so like in stature and visage, and condition, that hardly the one might be discerned or known from the other, but that *Alexander* was more cunning in all his deeds then was *Lodowick*, for he was a feminine man, and shame-faced, and these young men well loved together.

The *Emperor* had one only daughter named *Florentine*, she was right fair and gracious, and should be his heir, whom he loved intirely, she had a Court by her self, and servants to her assigned: to her the *Emperor*, every day was accustomed to send from his Table of his dainties, in token of love, by *Alexander*: in so much that the daughter began to have him marvellously in her favor, because of his wisdom and comely behavior. It happened upon a day, *Alexander* at meat-time had such business, & he served not at the Table, nor none other gave attendace for him in his room: *Lodowick* perceiving that served in his room: and as soon as he had served the *Emperor*, in his last service upon his knee, & *Emperor* commanded him to bear a dish to his daughter, as he was wont to do: thinking that he was *Alexander*. Then took *Lodowick* the dish and went to the palace of the *Emperors* daughter, & saluted her with great reverence, and set the meat before her: until that time he had not seen her. She perceiving anon that it was not

Alexander

Alexander, & said to him on this manner, What is your name, & whose son are you? He answered to her, & said, *Madam*, I am the King's Son of *France*, & my name is *Lodowick*: she said, I thank you for your labor, & then took his leave and departed: in ſome time came *Alexander* to the table, and they fulfilled their service.

The dinner being done, anon *Lodowick* went to ſome bed ſore ſick, and *Alexander* perceiving that, went to his chamber & ſaid unto him, O my beſt beloved friend and fellow *Lodowick*, how is it wth you, & what is ſome cauſe of your infirmity? He answered him and ſaid, The cauſe I know not, but I feel me ſore ſick, but I fear me I cannot eſcape ſome death. *Alexander* ſaid, The cauſe of your infirmity & diſeaſe I know well, for to day as ye did bear the meat to ſome *Emperors* daughter, ye beheld her countenance & beauty ſo fervently, that your heart was taken, and raviſhed with her love. Whereunto he answered, O *Alexander*, all the *Physicians* in the World could not more truly judge my ſickneſs, but I fear it will be my death. Then ſaid *Alexander*, Be of good comfort, & I will help you to my power: and ſo forthwith went to the merchant, & bought with his own money a fair cloth, ſet with precious ſtones, unknown to *Lodowick*, and preſented it in his behalf unto the *Princeſs*. As ſoon as ſhe beheld that, ſhe asked him where he had that coſtly and precious cloth? And he ſaid, *Madam*, of ſome ſon of ſome moſt Chriſtian King of *France*, who ſendeth it unto you for your love, for he having but once beheld your princely face, is grown ſo ſore ſick, ſome he lyeth upon his bed even unto his death: therefore if you ſuffer him to periſh, you ſhall never recover again your honor. Then ſaid ſhe, good *Alexander*, would you thus counſel me that I ſhould loſe my virginity? God defend that, and be you ſure *Alexander*, ſome for ſuch meſſages, you ſhall never more win thanks of me, therefore go out of my ſight, and ſpeak no more thereof to me. When *Alexander* heard that, he did Obedience and departed.

The next day *Alexander* went again to the City, and bought a Chaplet ſome was twiſe more in value than the cloth, & therewith he went to the *Princes* chamber, & gave it to her on ſome behalf of *Lodowick*. And when ſhe ſaw ſome coſtly gift, ſhe ſaid unto him in this manner, I marvell of you, that ſo often you have ſeen and ſpoken with me, that you have not ſo done your own errand in ſpeaking for your ſelf, but for another. Then answered he, O *Madam*, I have not been ſo diſpoſed, becauſe my birth is not to be compared wth yours, and alſo it happened me never ſuch a caſe as my heart was ſo wounded: and he that hath a good fellow, is bound for to do him good & true fellowſhip. And therefore now, excellent *Princes*, of your moſt abundant pity have compaſſion on him, & make him whole, ſome you have ſo ſore wounded to death, ſome it be not for ever laid unto your cruelty and hardneſs of heart. She answered him, Go your way, for at this time I will give you no answer thereto: And as he heard that, he took leave and departed.

And ſome third day he went to ſome City, & bought a girdle, ſome was

or more value, and costlier than the Chapter was, and presented it to her on the behalf of *Lodowick*: and when she saw and beheld that gift so precious, she said unto *Alexander*, Say to *Lodowick* that he come to my chamber about the third hour in the night, & he shall find the door open: and *Alexander* bearing that was glad, and went to his fellow and said, My best beloved fellow, be of good comfort, for I have conquered the *Princess* to you, and this night I shall bring thee to her chamber. And when that was said, he started up, as though he had wakened out of his sleep, and was well revived, and for great joy he became well: the next night following, *Alexander* took *Lodowick* and brought him into the chamber of the *Lady*, with whom he was in solace and joy all night, and from that time forth all her heart was upon him, so that there was but one only love between them both.

And after that, *Lodowick* used oftentimes to visit her, so that by process of time it came to the ears of the Knights and gentle-men of the Court, how that the *Emperor's* daughter was known by *Lodowick*, and they conspired among themselves, how they might find him and intrap him therewith, and so for to take him. As *Alexander* had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them, and when the Knights understood that, they fearing *Alexander*, suffered his fellow to go in peace. *Alexander* many times put himself in jeopardy for him, he not knowing thereof: but the *Princess* knew it well.

In short time after that, there came Letters to *Alexander* of the death of the King of *Egypt*, that he should hastily come and receive his Kingdom with honor and joy: and that shewed he even unto the *Princess* and *Lodowick*, and also of his departing: wherefore they were sorrowful and heavy. He said also unto the *Emperor*, My honorable Lord, please it you to understand, that I have received letters of the death of my Father, wherefore it becometh me to go, and receive the Kingdom, and that you will be pleased to give me leave to depart; and for all the benefits to me done, I offer my self and all my goods: and rather than I should by my going any way offend or displease you, my Lord, I will forsake all my Realm, and all that I have in the world, and abide w you still. Then said the *Emperor*, Know you for certain, that for your departure I am right heavy and sorrowful, for you were the best servant that was in all my Court: but it becometh not an *Emperor* to hinder his servants from their promotion, or advancements, but rather promote them to higher or greater honor. Therefore go you unto our Treasurer, and he shall deliver you as much Gold as you will have, and in the name of God (and my blessing) go into your Countrey. And thus *Alexander* had his leave of the *Emperor*, and bade him farewell: and they were all sorrowfull for his departure, for he was beloved of all.

Lodowick & the *Princess*, brought him on his way seven miles at the least: After that, *Alexander* would not suffer them to go any further

Further, then fell they both to the ground with great sorrow & heaviness, and *Alexander* took and lifted him up again from the ground and comforted him with fair words, and said, O *Lodowick*, my best beloved fellow, I warn you & the secrets being betwixt you and my Lady, you hide and keep them as privily as you may, and take good heed to all things, for I wor another shall come, & be in my stead, that shall envy you of the favour and grace & you stand in with the Emperor, and day & night shall ly in wait to take you with a fault, and to put you unto rebuke and shame. Then answered *Lodowick* & said, O *Alexander*, I shall beware as much as to me is possible: but how shall I do when I shall want your company? Therefore one thing I shall desire of you, & you take this Ring of me for a remembrance. Then said he, I shall for the love of you, gladly receive your Ring, and yet I shall never without the Ring forget you, and so he committed them both unto God. Then they embraced each other about the neck, and kissed, and so they departed.

Not long after, the Kings son of Spain, named *Guido*, was received of & Emperor, in the room and place of *Alexander*, to whom the steward assigned *Alexander's* place and chamber: the & was very sore against the will of *Lodowick*, but he could not help it. *Guido* seeing & *Lodowick* against his will had him in his fellowship, he grew envious against him: so *Lodowick* of a long time for fear of the said *Guido*, kept him out of his company of the Lady nevertheless afterwards being overcome with her love, sometimes he haunted and went again unto her as he before had done: *Guido* quickly perceiving the same, waited so long thereon, that he knew the truth, and was therefore certain that the Princess was by *Lodowick* known, and had company with her.

Upon a time it happened that the Emperor stood in the hall, and praised *Alexander* for his Gentleness and wisdom, *Guido* hearing & said, My Lord, he is not so much worthy to be commended as you imagine, for he hath of a long time been a Traitor in your house.

Then the Emperor said, Tell me how? *Guido* said you have but one only daughter, the which shall be your heir, and her *Lodowick* hath defiled, and lien by, through the help of *Alexander*, and he goeth to her every night as it pleaseth him.

And as soon as & Emperor heard thereof, he was sore moved, & began to be angry, & it happened *Lodowick* upon & same time to come throw the hall, and as the Emperor saw him, he said, What hear I of thee, thou evil and untrue body? If it be found and proved true thou shalt die the most shameful death & can be devised. *Lodowick* said, My Lord the Emperor, what is the cause? *Guido* answered, I say and depose here before my Lord against thee, & thou hast defiled his only daughter, and every night thou goest to her, and doest fornication with her, and w^h better I shall prove & make it good upon thy body with my body. Then said *Lodowick*, I am innocent, & not infected with that crime, and falsely thou

doſt helie me, and hereupon I hold the battel, and truſt to God thy falſhood ſhall come upon thine own head. Then the *Emperour* assigned unto them the day of combat. That done, *Lodowick* went unto the Lady, and ſhewed her *y* cauſe and *y* day of battel by the *Emperour* assigned, and in what manner *Guido* had accused him, and ſaid unto her, Now it becometh me to have your counſel or elſe I muſt die: for as you know, it hath not availed me to have gainſaid the battel, without I ſhould have yielded my ſelf guilty: *Guido* is ſtrong and hardy, that his like is none but *Alexander*, And I am feeble, and therefore if I fight the battel againſt him, I were but a dead man, and ſo you ſhall abide rebuke and ſhame. Then ſaid ſhe, Follow my counſel in *y* you miſtruſt your ſelf, go haſtily unto my father, and ſay unto him, that ye have received letters, whereby you are aſſured that the King your father is ſore ſick, and lyeth upon his death-bed, &c deſireth to ſee you, and to ſpeak w you in perſon, and to diſpoſe of his Kingdom before he depart out of this life: ſo deſire him to give you leave for the love of your father to go viſit him, and *y* he will prolong and lengthen the day of battel, that in *y* mean ſeaſon you may go and come: And when you have gotten leave, as haſtily as you can, ſecretly go to King *Alexander*, and being thither come, take him apart and ſhew him the cauſe of your coming, and require him in this your great extremity, that he will help and ſave us.

And when *Lodowick* had heard that counſel, it pleaſed him well and he did accordingly: And having obtained leave, and a long day, and reſpite of the battel prefixed and assigned, he then departed and took his Journey towards the Realm of Egypt, and never ſtayed day nor night, till he came into King *Alexander's* Caſtle.

And when that King *Alexander* had underſtanding of his coming, he was very glad, and went to meet him, and received him honorably, and he did wonder much at his coming. Then ſaid *Lodowick*, O my moſt dear Lord, and my beſt beloved friend, my life and my death is in your hands, for as you ſaid to me before, that I ſhould have another fellow, the which ſhould ly in wait to eſpy me, and deſtroy me without, I did look more wiſely unto my ſelf: ſo as long as I could, I did abſtain from her till I might no longer abide, but afterwards the Kings Son of Spain made warch ſo long after me, until he perceived the truth: in the end he accused me unto the *Emperour*, ſo that in the eight hereafter from this day, I muſt be ready and prepare for to fight with him, body againſt body: and as ye know well he is a very ſtrong and hardy man, and I am weak and feeble, and therefore hath *Florentine* counſelled me that I ſhould not hide this matter from you, for ſhe knoweth you for a faithful friend, and that you would not leave us in this great neceſſity.

Then ſaid *Alexander*, Is there any body that knoweth of your coming unto me for this matter, more than *Florentine*? he answered him, and ſaid, No creature living, for I took leave of the *Empe-*

for to go visit my father, lying grievously sick. Then *Alexander* asked of him. What counsell hath *Florentine* given you now, and in what wise might I help you? He said, O my most constant & faithful friend in this wise she hath counselled me, considering that we be like each other, that you should come and perform battel with him, and no man should know you but she: and if battle done, I should come again to the Court, and you return back to your own Countrey. Then he asked him, When the day should be of the battel? And he said eight dayes hence.

Then said *Alexander*, If I should this one day tarry before I depart hence, then I cannot come by the day prefixed, whereupon understand what I shall do, I have bidden all my subjects, that to morrow they should come to my wedding: and if I should go, then is the day lost: if I go not and do the battel, then *Florentine* and you are undone: what think you is best to be done? When *Lodowick* did hear that he fell to the earth, and began to sorrow out of measure, saying, Sorrow and heaviness come suddenly to me on all sides. Then said *Alexander* unto him, be of good comfort, for I shall not forsake you in this sort, though I should lose my life and kingdom, but hearken what I have thought upon: inso much that we are both like one another, so that if one of us cannot be known from the other, and as for me I am not rightly known here, but that all my barons, and all other my subjects will take you for me, therefore you shall here abide and tarry, and marry my wife in my stead, and hold the feast and nuptials, and do all things as if I my self were there present, except when as you come to be with my wife, look that you be there true and faithful, and I shall without any tarrying, go and take my horse, and ride thither whereast the battel shall be: and if God give me the victory, that I may overcome and vanquish your enemy, I will come again secretly, and you shall come again unto your best beloved. This done, *Alexander* bade *Lodowick* farewell: and then he took his journey towards the Emperor's Court, for to fight and to do the battel with *Guido*, and *Lodowick* tarried in *Egypt* in stead of King *Alexander*.

And upon the next morning came *Lodowick*, as though he had been King *Alexander*, & there solemnly in the face of the Church, he espoused King *Alexander's* wife, and solemnized the marriage feast with great royalty of delicacies and dainty meats, plenty of all manner of wines, and diverse melodies of instruments of musick, and great joy and cheer, for the Noble men and all other people that were there assembled. And when the night was come, he went to bed with the Queen, and laid between him and her a naked sword, whereof she had great wonder, but nothing she said, and so he lay with her every night, so long as *Alexander* was out.

Now King *Alexander* at the day that was prefixed & set, came unto the Emperor, and said, O most Sovereign Lord, it is so, that I have left my father very sick, and in great hazard of death, yet

nevertheless I am come to perform my promise, and with a full resolution to defend my honor. The Emperor said, you do honorably, and according to the valor of a noble-man, and fortune shall favour you (I hope) in your just and righteous quarrel.

And when the Emperors daughter understood that Alexander was come, anon she sent for him, and when he was come to her, she very courteously and kindly embraced him, and with great joy and gladness she kissed him, and blessed the time that she might see him again, and demanded of him where he had left her faithful friend & lover, *Lodowick*: then he declared unto her the whole discourse and circumstance, how he had left him King in his Realm, and so he took his leave of her, and went to *Lodowick's* chamber, and there was no creature thought otherwise but that he was *Lodowick*, except *Florentine* only. The next day following, before Alexander went unto battel, he said unto the Emperor, in the presence of *Guido*, My most renowned sovereign Lord, *Guido* hath falsely and unjustly accused me unto your most Noble Grace, in saying that I should be of such acquaintance with the Princess, your most vertuous and only daughter, which is to the great dishonor of your most noble person, and hers: whereunto I swear and affirm by the Holy Evangelists, that she was never in such manner of wise known by me as he hath alledged and informed unto you, which I shall prove and make good this day upon his body, with the aid and help of God.

Then answered *Guido*, Yet once I say again, and swear by the Holy Evangelists, and by all that God hath made, that thou hast had knowledge, and hast defiled the Emperors daughter, and that I will make good upon thy head.

Whereupon they leapt upon their Coursers, and ran so fiercely one at another, with their spears, that they both brake and shivered in pieces: and then they drew their swords, and fought so long together, until at last Alexander with great might and strength at one stroke smote off *Guido's* head, & sent it unto the Emperors daughter, whereof she was right glad, and bare it unto her Father, and said, Father, behold the head of him that hath so falsely defamed you and me.

When the Emperor perceived the victory, anon he sent for Alexander, whom he thought to have been *Lodowick*, and said unto him, O *Lodowick*, this day your honor and my daughters you have saved, you shall stand and be to morrow in my grace and favour, and whatsoever he be that hereafter again defame you, he shall for ever stand in my indignation.

Then answered Alexander and said, God always helpeth and saveth them that put their trust in him, and revengeth the wrong done unto the innocent.

But now, most renowned Lord, one thing I do intreat at your hands: at my departure from my Father, I left him sore sick, that it will please you to give me leave to go and see how it standeth with

with him, and if that he be any thing amended, I shall incontinently come again. Then the *Emperor* said, That please me, but you may in no manner of wise leave me, for from henceforth I cannot be without your presence.

Now *Alexander* having taken leave of the *Emperor*, bade him farewell, and with all the speed that he could make, ride back again unto his Realm. Now *Lodowick* having heard of his return with much joy he did ride to meet him, and having met together, with great gladness and cheer he friendly received him, & said, O most true friend of all friends, tell me how fortune hath favored you in this your journey and business, and to what end have you brought it? Then said he, Go to the *Emperor* and serve him as you have done before, for I have gotten you more grace & favour at his hands then ever you had in former times: and I have also cut off the head of your greatest enemy and adversary.

Then said *Lodowick*, You have not only at this time saved my life, but in like manner you have preserved me heretofore, the which kindness I shall never forget, neither as yet can I requite it: but God reward you, and so he departed, and went again to the *Emperor's* Court, and there was no man that had any knowledge of the absence of King *Alexander*, except *Lodowick* only.

And when that night was come, he went to bed to the Queen, and as soon as he was laid in bed, he began sweetly to embrace her, and with friendly words he kissed her. Then said she, You have made this time too long, in that you have shewed nothing of friendship or love, how may this be? then said he, Wherefore say you that? she said, Every night that I was in my bed, you have put betwixt you and me a naked sword, and you have never turned your towards me until now. And when he heard that, he thought on the truth of his fellow, and said, O my dear Lady, it was not done for any ill will, but for a good probation of love. But she said to her self, that love you shall have no more, but despight, and I will be revenged upon thee.

Then there was a Knight & she before had a little love & favor unto, and she began for to love him more and more, so long till as the last they fought and imagined how they might destroy & slay the King, & therefore they got poyson & poysoned the King, so if he had not been right strong of complexion, he had died thereof, for it wrought in him so fore, & it caused him to be a most foul and horrible leper, as ever was seen upon the earth. The Lords and noble-men of his said Realm, and the Queen also, seeing this, despised him, and said, that it becometh not a leper to reign over us, for he should not procure nor ingender any fair or clean heirs & so he was deposed of his dignity royal, and driven out of his Realm.

In & meantime died & *Emperor* of Rome, & *Lodowick* married his daughter, & after & *Lodowick's* Father died, so that *Lodowick* Reigns both *Emperor* of Rome, and King of France at once.

When King *Alexander* heard that, he thought in himself, Now my

my fellow reigneth and ruleth both the *Empire of Rome*, and *Realm of France*: to whom may I go better then unto him, for whom I have many times ventured my life? and upon a night he rose up and made him ready, and took with him his staff and clapper, and went towards the *Emperor's* Countrey.

And when he was come nigh unto the gate, he sat down amongst other poor *Lazars*, expecting the giving of alms: and upon a sudden as the *Emperor* went out of the palace, all the poor *Lazars* began to ring their clappers, and the good King *Alexander* did as the other did, but there was no alms given him: he tarried so long until the time that the *Emperor* was set and served at table.

Then went King *Alexander* unto the gate, and knocked thereat, and the porter asked, Who was there? *Alexander* answered him, I am a poor despised man, I pray you for the love of God, turn not away your sight from my visage, but that you will for the reward of God, do my message unto the *Emperor*. He asked what is the matter? *Alexander* said, Go and tell him, here is a *Lazar*, that is right horribly ugly to see, the which prayeth him for the love of God, and King *Alexander*, that he will grant him this day to eat his alms before him upon the earth in his hall. The porter answered, I wonder that you dare desire that of my Lord? for why? All the hall is full of Lords and noble-men, & if they should behold you, they would all abhorre and forsake their meat: but forasmuch as you have required it of me so lamentably for the love of God, I shall go and do your errand, whatsoever happeneth thereof: and so he went forward and did his message unto the *Emperor*. When the *Emperor* heard the porter name *Alexander* the King of *Egypt*, he said to the porter: Go thy wayes, and bring him before me, how horrible and ugly soever that his visage be, and ordain him a place before me, that he may eat and feed in my presence. The porter brought him in immediately, and ordained him a place, and set him to meat before the *Emperor*: and when he had well refreshed himself, he said unto one of the *Emperors* servants, My dear friend, do me this errand unto the *Emperor*, say unto him, that I pray him for the love of God and King *Alexander*, that he will send me his cup of wine: the servant said for the love of God I will do it, but I believe it will not be, for if you should but touch my Lords cup, he will not by any means drink of the same cup again: nevertheless he did the errand.

And when that the *Emperor* heard him to name King *Alexander*, he commanded that his cup should be filled wth the best wine, and carry it to him, the which wine when he had received, he put into his bottle, and took his ring that *Lodowick* had given unto him, and put it into the cup, and sent it again unto the *Emperor*.

And when the *Emperor* saw the ring, he instantly knew & it was & same ring & he had given unto *Alexander* in friendship, when he departed from him, & thought in his heart that King *Alexander* had been dead, or else & this man is very strangely come to the ring:
and

& commanded presently that the Lazer should not depart thence untill the time that he had spoken with him: for in no wise could he have any knowledge of him, nor yet repute him for *Alexander*.

After that Dinner was done and ended, the *Emperor* took the sick man apart & asked him how he came by that Ring: King *Alexander* demanded if that he knew well the Ring: the *Emperor* said, I know it right well. *Alexander* said, Wot you also to whom you gave it? the *Emperor* said I wot right well. How is it then, said *Alexander*, that you know not me, for I am *Alexander*, unto whom ye gave the same Ring? when the *Emperor* heard that, he fell to the ground for sorrow and tore his Robes and cloaths, and with many great sighings and bewailings said, O *Alexander*, you are the one half of my soul, where is your goodly & delicate body, now so unclean and pitifully infected, that was so fair and pleasant to behold? He answered, this is happened unto me, for the great fidelity that you have done unto me in the bed with my Wife, when you laid a naked Sword betwixt you and her: wherefore she became wroth, and hated me, that she & a Knight that in former time she had loved, hath poisoned me as you may see, now they have driven me out of my Realm.

And when the *Emperor* heard that, he for lovetook him about the Neck, and kissed him, and said, O my most dear & intirely beloved Brother, I sorrow to see you in this great perplexity and misery, I would to God I might die for you. But my most dear friend suffer patiently a little time, till that we have sent for all the *Physicians* and *Wise Masters* in Physick to have their counsel and advise, if there be any remedy to be had, or hope of recovery of your health: and if it be possible to help you, we shall neither spare Lordship, Empire, nor any other goods temporal, to make you whole and sound.

In the mean time he was brought into a fair Chamber richly hanged, and appointed of all manner of things that were both requisite and necessary for his ease and health. Then in all haste he sent his Messengers through all parts of the World, for the most expert and best Physicians that might be found: of which within a Month after were come and Assembled before the *Emperor*, thirty, that were right expert and very skilful in that Science: to whom the *Emperor* said, My well beloved Masters, I have a friend that is very grievously infected with a foul leprosie, whom I would very gladly were healed, and made as sound and whole as ever he was, sparing neither for Gold nor Silver, or any other goods whatsoever that I have in the whole World, but that I would gladly give to recover his health again.

Then answered *9 Masters*, all that ever is possible to be done in Physick, you shall soon understand, after that we have seen *9* person. And when they saw him, they knew the cause of his infirmity: & they said, it was incurable for all Physicians living.

And when *9 Emperor* heard that, he was right sory in his heart,

and committed it to the helping hand of Almighty God, calling unto him most of the Religious men that dwelt near unto *ſ* Court, and a number of poor People, besides many other devout Persons, desired of them earnestly to make their Prayers unto Almighty God that he would vouchsafe of his infinit goodness and mercy, to make whole his dear friend King *Alexander*, and the sooner for their good deeds and Prayers. And he himself (with many others) fasted and prayed himself to Almighty God, for the speedy recovery and health of his friend.

Now upon a time as King *Alexander* was at his prayers, there came unto him a voice from Heaven, saying, Tell *Lodowick* the *Emperor*, that if he with his own hands will take those two little Children which his *Empress* had at one burthen, & slay them, and that with the blood of them he will wash and bath his Body, then his flesh shall become as fair and as clean as the Bodies of those little Children: if not, thou must never look to be cured whilst breath is in thy Body, and so farewell.

When King *Alexander* had heard this most strange voice, he then began to think within himself, what voice it was, and from whence it came: then he replied to himself, and said, This vision is not to be shewed, for it is much contrary to humane nature, that any man should slay his own Sons, for the recovery of the health of a strange man.

The *Emperor* continued both night and day in prayer with great Devotion, still earnestly praying to God for remedy for King *Alexander*, never ceasing, untill such time that a voice came unto him, and said, How long will you thus call and cry unto me? when it was openly shewed unto King *Alexander*, by what means he might recover his health, and his body to become clean, without either spot or blemish.

Now the *Emperor* having heard that voice, he arose and went unto King *Alexander*, and said unto him, Of all friends the best and most true, blessed be the most high and everlasting God, the which never faileth them that put their whole trust in him: of whom I have knowledge, that it is shewed unto you, how & in what manner you may be recovered of your leprosie: wherefore I intreat and desire you, that you will plainly lay open unto me how this may be done for the restoring of your former health that we may have joy together: and if you should need any thing that may do you any good, I shall fulfill it unto my power; yea, and for your health, give all that I have too.

Alexander said, Sir, I dare not shew it to you, how that I may be cured and healed of my leprosie, for it exceedeth: and it is a thing against nature for to be done, therefore I will not as yet shew it you, howbeit I have great trust and confidence in you.

The *Emperor* said, *Alexander*, put your trust in me still, for whatsoever is possible for to be done for recovering, and restoring of your health, I shall do it: and therefore conceal nothing from me, I pray you.

Then

Then said *Alexander*, I have of God knowledge, that if you will slay your two Sons & your own hands, & wash me in their blood I shall be whole, & therefore I have not shewed it unto you: for methinketh it is against nature that the father should slay his own Children for the health of a stranger. The *Emperor* said, Say not that you are a stranger, for I love you as my self: and therefore if I had ten Children, I should not spare one for your health.

Afterwards the *Emperor* espyed his time when the *Empress* was out of the way, he went into the Chamber where the Children slept, and drew out his Knife, and cut both their Throats, and gathered the blood into a Vessel, and then he bathed and washed *Alexander* therewith. And when he was bathed, his body and flesh was as fair and clean, as though it had been a young Child. Then the *Emperor* had perfect knowledge of his Visage, & kissed him, saying, O good *Alexander*, now I see you in the same form which I have oftentimes delighted in.

Blessed be the Almighty God, that ever I had these Children by whom your health is restored, and your body made pure and clean. And as yet there was none that had knowledge of the death of those Children, save only the *Emperor* and King *Alexander*.

And when the *Emperor* saw that the good King *Alexander* was perfectly healed, he said unto him, I will ordain unto you an honorable company, and you shall go from hence about ten Miles, and the next day send me a Messenger, and let me know the day of your coming back again, and I shall then with great solemnity come & meet you, & you shall remain with me untill such times as I may conveniently provide for the recovery of your Realm again.

This counsel pleased King *Alexander* right well, and according to the *Emperor's* will it was performed: for on the next day following, there came a Messenger unto the *Emperor*, certifying him of the coming back again of King *Alexander*.

And when *Empress* heard these tidings, she rejoiced, and said unto *Emperor*, O my most best beloved Lord & *Emperor*, have you not just cause to rejoice & be glad, seeing that *Alexander* the King of Egypt is now coming to see you, whom of long time you have not seen? And if it please you to go & meet him, with your Lords and Gentlemen, I shall follow you with my Ladies & Gentlewomen. And as yet she knew not of the death of her two Children.

Then rode the *Emperor* and *Empress* with a great company of Lords and Ladies to meet with good King *Alexander*: and when they met together, & great reverence & honor they received him, and with great joy & gladness they brought him into the Palace. And when the time of Dinner was near at hand, *Alexander* was placed at the Table between the *Emperor* and the *Empress*, and all the mirth and cheer that she could make, she shewed unto him.

And when the *Emperor* perceived that, he was right joyfull & glad: and he was so exceeding well pleased, that he said, O mine

own *Florentine*, it Glads me above all things that you make unto King *Alexander* so good Cheer.

Then answered the *Empress*, and said, Wherefore should I not? Is not his company unto us more precious then Gold or Silver? but unto you, my Renowned Lord, much more, for by his means it was that you attained unto so great Honor & Dignity: and by him many times you have been saved from death. The *Emperor* answered, and said, Then I pray you, my only beloved *Florentine*, that you will take heed to my words & I shall say unto you: Saw you not that ugly & deformed Lazer which yesterday sate before our Table, & prayed me for the love of God, and good King *Alexander*, that I would give him drink? She said, My honorable Lord, I saw him well, and a more horrible man I did never behold. Then said the *Emperor*, I demand this one question of you, Put case that he were King *Alexander* and that he could not by any means be made whole, but with the blood of your two Sons, both which you in one day brought into the World, you would not that their blood should be shed, that he might bathe himself therein, to the intent that thereby he might have perfect health, and comely favor, as now you see him have?

She answered and said unto him, My Renowned Lord and Husband, wherefore demand ye of me that question: I say and tell you of a truth, & if I had ten Sons, I should gladly slay them with mine own hands for to prepare and ordain for him a bath, and would wash him therein my own self, rather then I should leave him in such a loathsome and miserable case, so horrible for to behold, & such danger of death withal. God might well send us more Children, but such a friend were a thing impossible for us ever hereafter to find throughout the whole World.

When the *Emperor* heard this from her, he was well pleased in his mind, and said, O my loving *Empress*, had you rather have your Children dead, Then *Alexander* should languish in this Leprosie? then shall I open & shew you now the truth of & matter: That foul lazer which you say, was *Alexander* that sitteth here by us, and by that means is made whole with the blood of our two Sons, and they are dead.

As soon as the *Empress* did hear that she began with Extremity of sorrow, mournfully to cry out, as nature would she should do, although she had said before, that she had rather see her Children dead, then *Alexander* should remain in such pain and miserie.

The now risers of & children understanding this, they presently with great crying & weeping ran to the Nursery & Chamber of them: and great sorrow & bewailing was made through & *Emperors* Court for his two Sons: & when & now risers of them came to the chamber, they found & children a playing, & singing a song of praise & thanksgiving to the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, for restoring again of their lives: and then they returned again in all haste unto the *Emperor* and *Empress*, and shewed unto them how
that

that the children were living, and that about their throats where they were cut, they had Circles of threed of gold: whereof was great joy & gladness in all y Court & thanksgiving to Almighty God, for that exceeding great miracle and wonderfull work.

After that the Emperor with a great multitude and number of people, gathered & Assembled together, went with King *Alexander* into Egypt, & set him again in his Royalty & possession of his Realm. And the Queen with the Knight, who had lived long together in Adultery he caused them both to be burnt. And when this was done the Emperor had one only Sister, whom he Married to King *Alexander*.

And when King *Alexander* had obtained all his Realm again, and was set in good rest and peace, the Emperor returned again, unto his Empire: and then King *Alexander* right wisely and politickly Governed himself in his Affairs, that he overcame his rebellious Enemies.

And when y he was seated in his glory, peace & might, he had thought & mind upon his Father & Mother by whom he was cast into the Sea, who dwelled in far parts. And from thence he sent unto them a Messenger, to let them have knowledge how y the King of Egypt upon such a day would be with them, to view those parts of the Countrey, and to sport himself, and to make a royal feast with them. And when the Messenger was thither come, they received him joyfully, & bountifull entertainment, & large gifts to him given & sent him back again, saying, That their services shall be ready at all time to do the Kings pleasure, but y could they never by power discern, y he should vouchsafe to shew them y honor whereof they were not worthy, as for to come to visit them to those parts, & to sport himself there a while.

The Messenger returned back towards the Kings Court, and there shewed the King how willingly they would receive him, & in what manner they did reward him, and how true & faithfull they were & ready to do him service at his commandment, where-with the King was well pleased. And when the day was come that was set, the King with a fair company rode towards his fathers house, the which was to the Knight his father, and mother, unknown that he was their Son.

When the King was come near to his fathers Castle, the Knight rode joyfully to meet & receive him: & when he came nigh to the King, he alighted from his horse, and did his reverence upon his knees, but the King took him up presently, & commanded him to take horse again, and so they rode together unto the Castle.

And when that they were come thither, the mother came unto him, and fell upon her knees, and welcomed him gladly, and the King took her up as lovingly, And kissed her right friendly: and she said unto him, My most honorable Lord, you do this (unworthy) great honor with the presence of your most honorable personage, the which we shall never be able to deserve.

After

After that the Meat was all ready, and that time of day was come to go to Dinner, the Father came with a Basin & Ewer & the Mother with a Towel, saying, Sir, all things are ready, pleaseth it you to wash? And when the King saw that he smiled, & said to himself, Now is the Song of the *Nightingal* true, that my Father & my Mother should gladly fulfill, as I have said, if that my self should thereunto consent, and suffer them to do it. But he would not suffer them to do him any such service, saying, Your Age is to be honored and worshipped, and therefore I will have none of it: & then he called one of his servants unto him, whom he commanded to do that service. Then said the Knight, You will not suffer us to do it for our honor, because we are not worthy thereof. The King said, Have I not said, that for your Age I forbear you? When the King was set at the Table he set his Mother on the right hand of him, and his Father on the left side, and they, as much as they might or durst, did behold his Favor and Countenance.

After Dinner, the King presently entred into a fair Chamber, and made the Knight with his Lady to follow him in, and commanded all others to avoid their presence.

And when they were all alone, & King said, Have you no children? They answered, we have neither Son nor Daughter. And the King said, Had you never any? The Knight answered, We have had one Son; but he is long ago dead. Then & King asked of what death he died? And the Knight said, A natural death. Then the King said, If I may otherwise know or find them, you are found & a most horrible fault. Then asked the Knight, My most honorable & Renowned Lord, wherefore enquire you earnestly after our son? The King answered & said, That do I not without just cause, & therefore I must & will know of what death he died: if you will not tell me, I shall cause you both to die a most shamefull death.

When they heard that, they fell upon the ground on their Knees before him, & asked him pardon and forgiveness for their lives. But the King would not suffer them to kneel, but took them up, and said; To that intent came I not unto your house, to eat your bread, and to betray you: but say to me the very truth, and you shall be pardoned: for it is given me to understand, that you have put him to death, and if that ye be found culpable therein, and come to Judgement, you must die a most shamefull death.

Then said the Knight, My most honorable Lord pardon me my life, and I shall shew you the very truth. The King said, Fear not for I shall do you no harm.

Then answered the Knight and said, My most dread Sovereign Lord, we had a Son that was wise, & learned, & right well understood, & upon a time as he stood before us, & served us at the Table; there came unto & Window a *Nightingal* that sung exceeding sweetly, whose song he began to interpret, & to tell us what it meant, & said, This bird singeth that I shall become so great and mighty

mighty a Lord that it shall be to your honor & advancement, in such wise that you my father shall be glad to hold a basin & water to wash my hands, & my mother a towel if that I would suffer it.

And when I did hear that, I was fore moved and vexed in my mind, and so I took him upon my shoulder, and cast him into the Sea for to drown him.

Then said the King, What evil might have come to you, if he had been made so great and mighty: Me thinketh it should have been for your honor, comfort and profit. The Knight said, My Renowned Lord, it was no reason, but a woodness.

The King answered, That was a great foolishness of you, that you would do against the ordinance and will of God. And now you shall know for truth I am your Son that ye did cast into the Sea, and God of his great mercy and goodness hath saved me, and by his grace hath brought & preserved me to this estate & dignity.

And the Father and Mother hearing that, with fear and joy replenished and amazed, did fall flat to the ground, whom he lovingly and friendly took up, saying, Fear not, but rather rejoice and be glad, for you shall suffer no harm, but my Exaltation shall be to your glory, joy and profit: and so he kist both Father and Mother, with great joy and gladness. Then began the Mother to weep and lament greatly, and the King said unto her, Leave off your sorrowing and weeping, and be of good cheer, for in my Realm you shall be honored above me, during my life: and so he took them both with him into his Kingdom, where they dwelt a long time together in honour and joy, and ended their dayes with comfort and love of all the people.

*Here followeth the application of the Example
to the Purpose.*

Then said *Dioclesian the Emperor's Son*, Lord, have you understood what I have said. The *Emperor* said, Right well. Then said the Son, My most honorable and redoubted Father, although that God hath given and indued me with Wisdom and Understanding above others, that shall not be impairing of your honor and might, but more for the preservation & maintenance of the same: so in like manner the Kings excellent Majesty, which was nothing to the hindrance of the Father, but this rather, for his worship, profit, and greater comfort. For as long as they lived, it was in very great joy and mirth, that they were loved of the people, and honored of his Kingdom. Then said the *Emperor*, My beloved Son, I will wholly resign all the Empire unto you to Govern & Rule, for I perceive well by your narration that you have to me declared, that it is best for me, and most for mine ease, that I now leave this worldly and tedious business, and the labor and care of a King, and betake me to my rest and ease for I am old and feeble. Then answered the Son, and said unto his Father, My most honorable Lord and Father, so shall it be: but as long as ye live, you shall have the Authority and Government of the Empire.

The seven Wise Masters.

Empire, to do your command, as it appertaineth unto an *Emperor*: but in all the businesses that are laborous & troublesome, I will alwayes be ready to minister any service that possioly I can according to my bounded Duty.

How Judgment was given upon the Empress, and how she and her Lovers were put to Death.

Then the *Emperor* commanded the Judges and Justices to sit in Judgement, and to bring again the *Empress* before them with the Ladies, and also the ribauld her best beloved, cloathed in the vesture and habit of a Woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the *Empress*: Then the *Emperor's* Son asked Sentence and just Judgement upon them, saying,

My most honorable Lord and Father, even as you are *Emperor* of all the World, and that your Majesty and Power required to do true Justice unto all your Subjects that desire it, so now I demand, that you this day do give right Sentence, and true Judgment upon the untruth, falshood and shame, which were put and alledged unto me by the *Empress*. For which the accusations, I have been seen seven times led unto the Gallows, & have stood in great jeopardy and peril of my life: and also that the hath been to you untrue of her body, as you have seen by good proof made before you, and on the which I ask Judgment, and therefore command your Judges and Justices to give Sentence thereupon, according to right, Equity, and Law.

As soon as the *Empress* heard this, she fell flat to the Earth before the *Emperor*, and asked mercy and forgiveness for her just Offence and Mifdoing: but it helped nor profited her nothing, for the Son would have right, and desired Judgment. Then spake the Judges and Justices, Her own misdeeds condemn her, and the report of her Lemman by her kept and found, therefore we give Sentence against the *Empress*, that she shall be bound to a Horses-tail, and drawn through all the Streets of the City to the place of Execution, and there to be Burnt. We Judge and give Sentence against the ribauld, that he shall be quartered and smitten in pieces, and his flesh cast to the Hounds and Birds of the Air, for to devour him. And this Sentence was approved and allowed of all People.

Hereafter in short time dyed the *Emperor*, and *Diclessan* his Son Governed and Ruled the Empire with great Wisdom, and always held and kept his *Masters* with him in great honor and glory. By whose Counsel and Wisdom he Governed the Empire, and he Excelled all his Predecessors in Riches, and doing right and Justice: and his *Masters* so loved him above all others in the World, that many times they put themselves in great peril and jeopardy of their lives for him, and so ended their days in joy and honor, to the Praise of Almighty God.



